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KENT ON SUNDAY

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IT'S WHAT SUNDAYS ARE ALL ABOUT

No.432 January 2, 2011



INSIDE MAKE A FRESH START IN OUR TIME FOR CHANGE SUPPLEMENT

ACADEMIES ARE PUSHING KCC TO 'TIPPING POINT'

Special needs services under threat as switch to academies continues

By **MARIJKE COX**

COUNTY Hall could be forced to stop providing crucial support to traditional council-run schools sooner than originally thought, unions have warned.

Although the rate at which schools are opting for academy status remains at a steady pace, almost a third of secondaries have become or are in the process of breaking away from local authority control to become academies.

This includes those that were changed under the Labour Government, a system that saw 'failing' schools – those unable to meet the 30 per cent A*-C GCSE target – turned into academies.

Secretary of the Kent branch of the National Union of Teachers, John Walder, said the point where KCC would have to stop providing school support services – such as for children with special needs – could be much sooner than people expected.

"I have made an inquiry into when the tip point could be – this is the point when the local authority can no longer continue to offer local education services because schools do not depend on the council anymore," he said.

"I think this will be sooner than initially thought – it could be in the next year or 18 months."

When the academies bill was introduced, Kent County Council leader Paul Carter openly stated he would support the programme under the Coalition and encouraged all secondaries to apply so to create a "level playing field".

But he stressed the more schools that broke away from local authority control, the less money there would be in KCC's budget for those that chose not to make the move.

Those converting to academies are given more independence and responsibility – despite remaining publicly funded – including the ability to set their own pay for staff, greater control of their budget and freedom from the National Curriculum.

They can also choose to buy services, such as special needs support, away from KCC.

A spokeswoman from the Association of Teachers and Lecturers said some authorities had already stopped providing school support.

"The more schools that become academies the less money councils get because the funds go straight to the school, which can buy its services elsewhere," she said.

"It becomes uneconomic for the local authority to continue providing school services when there are just a few

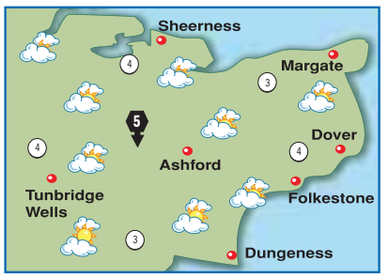
CONTINUED ON PAGE TWO





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Kent today



TODAY: It will be a dull but mainly dry day with cloudy skies and perhaps just a little drizzle at times. There is going to be a gentle north-westerly breeze. Max temp 3-6C (37-43F). **TONIGHT:** Cloudy for a time, but clear spells will develop later. A cold night. Min temp -2 to 1C (28-34F).

Around Britain

		°C	°F			°C	°F
Aberdeen	sleet	4	39	London	cloudy	5	41
Belfast	cloudy	5	41	Liverpool	cloudy	5	41
Birmingham	cloudy	4	39	Manchester	fair	4	39
B'mouth	cloudy	4	39	Newcastle	fair	3	37
Bristol	fair	4	39	Norwich	cloudy	4	39
Cardiff	cloudy	6	43	Oxford	cloudy	4	39
Cork	cloudy	5	41	Southsea	cloudy	5	41
Edinburgh	fair	3	37	S'hampton	cloudy	4	39
Glasgow	fair	5	41	Southport	fair	5	41
Isle of Man	fair	6	43	Swansea	fair	6	43
Leeds	fair	3	37	Torquay	cloudy	5	41

Sun & moon

Sunrise	8.02am	Sunset	3.57pm	Lighting up times:
Moonrise	6.29am	Moonset	2.06pm	3.57pm to 8.02am

High Tides

	today				tomorrow			
	ht (m)		ht (m)		ht (m)		ht (m)	
Dover	09.15	6.1	21.48	6.1	10.08	6.2	22.33	6.3
Margate	10.10	4.4	22.42	4.3	11.05	4.5	23.28	4.5
St Mary's	02.49	5.1	15.18	5.0	03.42	5.3	16.07	5.2

Week ahead

monday Sunny spells. max 4C min 0C

tuesday Fairly cloudy. max 5C min 1C

wednesday Sunny intervals. max 5C min 1C

thursday Sunny spells. max 6C min 1C

friday Rather cloudy. max 6C min 0C

saturday A fair day. max 5C min 0C

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Calls for self-service libraries to be shelved

£1.5m project will see 83 full-time jobs axed

By **MARIJKE COX**
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A UNION has slammed plans for self-service tills in libraries, claiming it will destroy what is already a diminishing service.

The controversial changes will see visitors to about 30 of the county's libraries checking books in and out themselves and paying their own fines on self-issue terminals.

Kent County Council (KCC) said the £1.5 million project, for which costs will be covered within 18 months, will be more efficient and cost-effective than the current system, saving £1m a year.

But Zoe Van Dyke, regional organiser for Unison, said the move will have a detrimental impact on what is already a flagging service.

"We've seen significant reductions over the last five years with seniority of staff being removed and less experienced staff brought in," she said.

"It looks as though KCC are continuing to remove the levels of support for visitors who may need help and advice about what book they want and how to find it.

"Not everybody is computer literate and I think there will be big implications, especially in outlying areas of the county."

Ms Van Dyke said elderly people are being forced to embrace new ideas of technology and could struggle with the new system, eventually putting them off from using libraries.

She also said people who are unable to afford to buy books and instead use the free library service may suffer, causing education standards to diminish.

"This is taking away something central to the community and ordinary people," she added.

As part of the savings, 83 full-time posts will be removed from the current structure.

A KCC spokeswoman said many of these are already vacant and others will be covered by retirement or voluntary redundancies.

The authority, which is looking to put the self-service tills in between April 2011 and March 2012, said the new systems would be easy to use.

All books and DVDs will have electronic tags allowing people to issue and return items, pay fines and manage their accounts themselves.

The council argued it would mean staff spending less time carrying out routine tasks, and more time helping customers face-to-face.

KCC cabinet member for community services Cllr Mike Hill said: "Self-issue technology will help us to be more efficient and cost effective while maintaining an excellent level of service to our customers."

Ms Van Dyke added: "I think they are removing a vital service from people who need it. People who use libraries don't just need a book off the shelf."



NOVEL APPROACH: KCC's plans will be more cost-efficient, saving the authority £1m a year

'KCC is well placed to deliver this vision'

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

using them. I couldn't say when each council would stop, but when it becomes uneconomic that's when it will happen – for some that could be quite soon."

But KCC cabinet member for children, families and education, Cllr Sarah Hohler said the council is continuing to work with all schools, regardless of their status.

"Although approximately one-third of secondary schools have converted to academy status, very few primary schools are applying at this stage," she said.

"We are developing services that will support the academies in both their day-to-day operations and also at a strategic level. They will be able to buy back these services as from the beginning of next term.

"I am confident our highly-qualified teams with local knowledge will be valued by academies and welcome the opportunity to market test our services."

Cllr Hohler said a recent White Paper – The Importance of Teaching – outlined a changing role for local authorities as champions of children and parents, ensuring the school system works for every family and challenges every school to do the best for local people.

"Local authorities will also have a role in bringing together all services for children in an area so that every child is ready and able to benefit from high-quality teaching in excellent schools and also to market school improvement services," she said.

"KCC is well placed to deliver this vision."

Gravesend-based independent education advisor Peter Read said an educational model looking at what was best for the children should be used rather than a business model.

He added: "Children with special needs, for example, could suffer because there may not be proper provision made for them in the system."



Fears switch to Pembury will lead to downgrading of Maidstone Hospital

County town maternity services to be ditched

By **JENNA PUDELEK**
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CAMPAIGNERS have lost their battle to save maternity services at Maidstone Hospital after the Health Secretary approved controversial plans to move them to Pembury.

Andrew Lansley wrote to NHS West Kent and Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust to reveal his decision.

Campaigners in Maidstone fear it will lead to a downgrading of their hospital and accused the Government of trying to bury the news in the Christmas festivities.

Dr Paul Hobday, British Medical Association (BMA) spokesman for Kent and a leading opponent of the plans, said: "The Health Secretary has cynically tried to bury his illogical decision to close Maidstone's Maternity unit in the Christmas festivities as he faces embarrassment otherwise by totally ignoring overwhelming GP and patient opinion.



RELOCATION: Maternity services will be moved from Maidstone to Pembury (above)

Exposed

"He now needs to answer how this is consistent with his White Paper putting GPs in charge of commissioning and promising patients 'no decision about me without me'.

"The main ideas in his reforms have fallen at the first hurdle and are exposed for what they really are – continued break-up and continued privatisation of our NHS."

Consultant-led maternity services and inpatient paediatric services will now be moved to the state-of-the-art, private finance initiative (PFI) hospital at Pembury.

But protesters including Maidstone GPs, residents and politicians, have pledged to continue opposing the move.

Maidstone MP Helen Grant (Con) said: "He [Lansley] has completely ignored his own fundamental criterion for local GP support in hospital reconfiguration decisions.

"The evidence of local GP opposition is overwhelming in this case.

"The decision also runs contrary to the White Paper placing GPs at the centre of our NHS, throwing the entire initiative into doubt.

"I am considering the position with Kent County Council and the Maidstone Action for Services in Hospital [MASH] campaign.

"I have also asked Mr Lansley to delay any implementation until such time as the GPs are in a position to review the situation themselves as NHS commissioners."

Mr Lansley gave his final approval after a report from NHS South East Coast, the strategic health authority that covers Kent, Surrey and Sussex, which explored views of residents and GPs.

The west Kent NHS trusts said they understood that a number of local people and doctors were still concerned about the changes, and would continue to engage with those affected up to and beyond the opening of the £225 million hospital in September.

Marion Dinwoodie, the primary care trust's chief executive, said: "We recognise there are still concerns about the changes, and we are committed to continuing to address these and give local people the confidence they need in their women and children's services."

Glenn Douglas, chief executive of the hospital trust, said the changes would give pregnant women in Maidstone new choices about where to give birth.

He added: "These important changes make the very best use of the skills and expertise that exist within our clinical teams for patients and maintain the highest and safest standards of care for women and children throughout the south of west Kent.

"The Secretary of State has agreed the plans should go ahead, and his decision is based on assurances from local and national experts. We can now move forward with clarity and confidence."

Health trusts' review bad news for birthing centres

A RADICAL overhaul of maternity services in east Kent is being planned involving closures of birthing centres at three hospitals.

It forms part of a five-month review by East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust (EKHUFT) and NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent, looking into the provision of care.

There are currently two midwife-led birth centres for low-risk births in Dover and Canterbury, one midwife-led unit at Ashford's William Harvey Hospital, and another due to be opened at the QEQM hospital in Margate.

There are also consultant-led obstetric units at Ashford and Margate.

But staff shortages have forced health chiefs to close the Dover Birthing Centre at Buckland Hospital until January, although it will remain open for other services.

The Canterbury birthing centre will suspend services in January and the recently completed midwife-led unit at Margate will stay closed while the review is under way.

EKHUFT medical director, Neil Martin, said it was not an easy decision to make.

"We have taken into account these staff shortages and our priority is that the highest possible standards of safety continue to be applied to mothers giving birth and we are not prepared to take any risks," he said.

"East Kent is extremely proud of the wide choice of birthing options we offer to mothers and we intend to continue offering as much choice as possible, as long as we can provide the high level of support necessary to ensure these choices are safe for mothers and their babies."

Patients and the public will be invited to give their views during the review.

NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent's director lead for maternity services Hazel Carpenter said the trust had a duty to ensure the needs of pregnant women were met.

"A rising birth rate requires increasing levels of care," she said.

"Staffing units round the clock with the right level of midwifery skills can be difficult – so the reason for this review is to ensure we can rise to the challenge and continue to provide safe care and the level of choice mothers-to-be expect within our budget."

Turkish boat blaze claims sailor's life

A SEAMAN died after being rescued from a burning ship on the Channel.

The man was one of three crew members flown to the Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital, in Margate, by an RAF helicopter on Christmas Eve after an engine room caught fire on a Turkish cargo vessel.

It is thought the two surviving sailors – who remain in a critical condition – suffered smoke inhalation and burns.

Move to allow dogs back into harbour

STRINGENT controls banning dogs from a harbour due to the threat of rabies near UK borders are being removed.

Councillors at Thanet District Council agreed that an unpopular by-law, introduced in 1994 to stop people bringing dogs to Ramsgate harbour, should be repealed.

It was brought in when the threat of rabies, a potentially fatal virus commonly transmitted by dogs, was more common.

The by-law removal process is expected to take between three and six months.

MP joins pack in bid to retain hunting ban

ONE of Kent's newest MPs is among a group of rebel Tories who could oppose a repeal of the hunting ban.

Chatham and Aylesford MP Tracey Crouch backed a statement saying "this government has far more important things to do than spending time on bringing back cruelty to animals for sport".

She is one of 22 Tories and 42 Lib Dems against a repeal of the ban on hunting with dogs, according to a survey by the League against Cruel Sports.

Earlier this year Prime Minister David Cameron promised he would give a free vote on the law.



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School sports U-turn 'not going anywhere'

Coalition rethink won't help after Olympics, says partnership chief

By **MARIJKE COX**
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A LEADING campaigner in the schools sports dispute has accused Government of misleading the public over its U-turn of the scheme.

Peter La Rossignol, competition manager for school sports partnerships (SSP) in Kent, said the move by Whitehall was a "small gesture" which would not go far enough in promoting competitive sport within schools.

"The public think there has been a big U-turn, but it's not really going to go anywhere," he said. "After the Olympics there will be nothing in schools."

Education Secretary Michael Gove sparked uproar in October with his announcement that the entire £162 million funding for school sports partnerships would be abolished.

Casualties

The globally-acclaimed programme encourages competitive opportunities within schools and has seen the number of Kent students taking part in sport twice a week soar.

But it became one of Government's many casualties in the spending cuts.

This week, however, after strong opposition from schools, sports clubs and sporting legends including Olympic diving sensation Tom Daley and heptathlon star Denise Lewis, Mr Gove announced £65m of funding to promote competitive sports in schools over the next three years.

He also said a further £47m would be made available to allow SSPs – of which there are 15 in Kent – to continue to the end of the academic year in 2011.

But Mr La Rossignol said the £65m, which will allow every secondary school to release one PE teacher for a day a week to continue the scheme in sports provision, was not enough.

"I work full time, five days a week, with about 60 schools in the area I cover," he said.

"One day a week for each school – not including primaries – just won't work. Even with seven full-time competition managers in Kent there is so much work to do.

"Government is expecting a PE teacher to take that over in each school. They are misleading people into thinking there has been some sort of U-turn when actually it's not going to keep competitive sport up in schools.

"It's a bit of a cop out."

Mr La Rossignol said he and the other competition managers in Kent would lose their jobs next year and admitted he did not think this would change.

"I'm trying to keep up the campaign, but I just think Government has made people believe they are keeping the sports in schools going.

"After the Olympics though there will be nothing – it will only get worse."

Mr La Rossignol, who works in schools in mid-Kent, Ashford, Sheppey and Sittingbourne, said the number of students doing sport each week had risen from 20 per cent to 50 per cent in his area and just recently 850 pupils from 38 different schools ran in a cross-country event at Leeds Castle.

Last month, members of the SSP in Thanet launched a campaign to fight against the funding cut.

Jason Jones, head of PE at Hartsdown Technology College in Margate, said: "I have no doubt that removing the partnership programme, which is admired around the world, will dramatically affect future participation rates in all types of sport around the UK.

"The impact to the health and well being of young people will be marked."

Sports and Olympics minister and MP for Faversham and Mid-Kent, Hugh Robertson, said he wanted sport to be ambitious and funding to remain within schools' budgets.



U-TURN: School Sports Partnerships were set to be abolished as part of spending cuts

Crossing toll rise money will not be ring-fenced

TRANSPORT chiefs have revealed that additional income made from increased toll charges at Dartford will not be ring-fenced for improvements to the crossing.

Minister for transport Mike Penning said money would be used for transport projects across the country – including the crossing – but that the Government had no intention of putting aside funds specifically for improvements to the bridge or tunnel.

But Dartford MP Gareth Johnson said ring-fencing should be a non-issue considering the tolls should be scrapped altogether.

Previously, government officials had pledged to drop the toll charges when construction costs for the crossing were paid off, but since it went into profit in 2004 they have remained in place.

Instead of scrapping charges, they were increased from £1 to £1.50. In 2011 this will rise to £2, and in 2012 to £2.50.

Government is looking into a free-flow charging technology to reduce congestion, which will be paid for by the increased tolls.

Mr Johnson said: "They should be removed completely. All we've ever had in Dartford is pollution and congestion.

"The ring-fencing of money made through the charges should be a non-issue because the tolls should not be there."

Brian Macdowall, secretary of the Kent branch of the Association for British Drivers, said the Government was forcing drivers to accept the inevitably of permanent charging by stating that the next two increases would not be ring-fenced but transferred to a general transport pot.

"Government extracts over £50 million a year in profits causing totally avoidable daily jams in the process, and is manipulating taxpayers into believing electronic tolling is the answer," he said.

"Diverting price increases elsewhere is cynical manipulation of public opinion.

"Kent ABD challenges Mike Penning to hold a referendum on whether the public want the charges removed.

"After all, it's their money, not the Government's, that is being used to maintain tolling. What kind of democracy is that?"

Boxing Day tragedy

A PEDESTRIAN was killed after a car lost control and mounted a pavement.

The silver Mini Cooper was travelling along the A28 Canterbury Road at Birchington on Boxing Day when it collided with a man who was on a footpath.

He was taken to Margate's Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother hospital where he was pronounced dead.

The female driver was treated for minor injuries.

TV licence warning

EMPLOYERS are being urged to get TV licences after more than 1,000 businesses in the UK were caught without one.

TV Licensing warned companies that allow staff or customers to watch television at their premises over the holiday period needed to be correctly licensed or face prosecution.

Jon Shaw, Kent's TV Licensing spokesman, said: "We have to take action against those who watch TV illegally and businesses that try to get away with it might find the price of being caught higher than just a fine of up to £1,000."

Visit www.tvlicensing.co.uk/business for details on how to obtain a licence.

Funds to stem flood

TWO councils have been given a £4.4 million share of £21m in grants to manage flood risk.

Bexley Council and the London Borough of Bromley will receive funding for new responsibilities such as risk management plans.

Bromley will receive £141,600 in 2010-11 followed by an annual payment of £252,700 from 2012-13. Bexley will receive £130,700 in 2010-11 and £203,500 thereafter.

Environment Secretary Caroline Spelman said: "This money will help local flood authorities identify and deal with the risk of flooding."





THE INTERVIEW

BY TOM BETTS

Horribly good fun lifted from page to stage

AS ONE of the brains behind the stage adaptations of the tremendously popular Horrible Histories books, Neal Foster has enjoyed huge success taking the shows to the masses.

The books – written by Terry Deary and Peter Hepplewhite – are renowned for offering a skewed and hilarious take on history. Neal, 45, the show producer, said: "They concentrate on the rude, funny, gory, nasty and horrible side of history as a way of getting young people interested. Although the BBC is looking to produce an adult TV series, I understand, as they are so popular with adults, too.

"The whole thing is just a wonderful and fun way of getting people interested in history and the books have done that, I'm sure. They have sold so many copies and the series is expanding and finding new fans all the time."

The acclaimed stage versions have been running for eight years and have proved popular with readers and fans, as well as Horrible Histories novices.

Neal approached Terry Deary with the idea of taking it to the stage. From there the tours were born and started to play theatres across the country on a regular basis.

Neal said: "The shows have been hugely successful and really hit the spot. Schoolastic, which publishes them, has been very happy, too. We are now into our eighth year, and the current production is the second time we have come back to Egyptians and Romans.

"Essentially, the show is scenes from aspects of those two people's history all tied in to a storyline which takes you through it."

Neal has updated the Romans side of the production after he admitted to not being entirely happy last time it toured.

He said: "In the show we meet Boadicea in all her glory, we find out more about what Roman emperors got up to, take the audience into the Coliseum and much more. We also have Bogglevision, an interactive 3D video screen experience, so you really feel part of the battle. It works fantastically well and we're very happy with the results. To do this show again, to take it on tour again, has given us the chance to have another look at the Romans.

"We were struggling last time and I recommissioned a new adaptation and we are really, really happy with it. That's one reason to look forward to the new dates, to come back with a better show. Like the Romans, we've been fairly ruthless about getting it right this time."

Neal says much of the Horrible Histories audience is made up of school trips.

"They make up a lot of the seating, yes. Horrible Histories is very popular with schools as it works well with children's studies. A lot of the material is taken from the books, with interesting facts we add ourselves. There will be many familiar characters and it works amazingly well.

"It's almost like a fantastic variety show with a historical and fun angle.

"An audience with such a young age brings so much energy to it all and that's another big plus, although we know adults enjoy the shows just as much."

The Awful Egyptians and Ruthless Romans Horrible Histories will be at the Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells, from February 1-5.

For tickets and show times, call the box office on 01892 530613 or visit www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk.



MODERN MAN: Horrible Histories show producer Neal Foster

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Budget cuts 'disguised by smoke and mirrors'

A TOWN hall finance chief has accused the Coalition of using "smoke and mirrors" to hide the true extent of cuts to local authority budgets, ***writes Marijke Cox***.

Deputy leader and finance member for Medway Council, Alan Jarrett, said Whitehall had tried to make the deep cuts seem less than they actually were.

"I find the smoke and mirrors way the Government has attempted to make it look like Medway is only losing around four per cent – when in reality it will see cuts of nearly 12 per cent next year – particularly unpalatable," he said.

Two weeks ago the Government announced a cut of 3.6 per cent in the unitary authority's spending, but Cllr Jarrett said at the time it was more likely to be about 10 per cent.

Failing

Since then, however, officers working through the figures have found a much larger total cut of 11.9 per cent. This figure takes into account the scrapping of grants for particular functions – something councils have accused the Government of failing to do – as well as the cuts to the main formula grant.

It means Medway, which must find £50 million in savings over the next four years, will see a funding gap of £23.5m for the 2011/12 financial year – £4m more than forecast.

Cllr Jarrett said: "Medway has traditionally received a lot less but through hard work and determination we have continuously managed to balance our budget.

"We have consistently been judged as providing good value and set about preparing for the cuts earlier this year. We knew from our forecast that we would have to make difficult decisions in order to provide the services residents expect while still saving money.

"The fact the Government is giving us even less – and considerably below what other councils are receiving – is going to make balancing our budget even more difficult."

The Government stated any council whose spending power would drop by more than 8.9 per cent would receive a "top-up".

Thirty-six councils in England will receive this, but based on the Government's figures Medway will miss out.

A council official said: "This is despite the fact Medway's budgets have always been tight. It receives one of the lowest grants of any unitary authority and has a traditionally low council tax base."

Medway cabinet members have instructed officers to start consultation on team restructures, which will lead to more job cuts on top of the 104 predicted. Its regeneration arm, Medway Renaissance, has also been closed, with 20 jobs lost. Although frontline services will be protected, the Government has said grants in areas such as transport, skills training and migration will go.

The official added: "The council will be setting a budget for the new financial year in February and will need to take into account the huge drop in funding."

Kent County Council revealed two weeks ago that the 1.82 per cent grant reduction for next year, set out by Government, was also much lower than the true figure.

Cabinet member John Simmonds said the figure was more likely to be around 10 per cent. He said full details would be available in January's budget.

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MP backing new rights for holiday park tenants

A TORY backbencher has thrown his weight behind plans to give holiday park tenants the same security as homeowners.

Sittingbourne and Sheppey MP Gordon Henderson raised a debate in Parliament to highlight problems with current planning regulations which see residents of holiday parks forced from their homes for two months of the year.

Mr Henderson, whose Sheppey constituency has almost 7,000 park homes, said many of these are freehold properties. Under current planning law, some of the sites have 10-month occupancy and others just eight months.

The Government, however, intends to bring all residential and home park licensing and leasing under the protection of the Residential Property Tribunal Services to give owners and tenants the same security as those in normal homes.

Mr Henderson said: "I want to see a more flexible and logical planning regime with regards to park homes. If properties are of a high enough standard then I see no reason why they should not be occupied for 10 months of the year, and in some cases all-year-round.

"I am also keen to see some of the excess capacity in our holiday home sector converted into affordable residential homes to help ease our current housing shortage."

To support his argument Mr Henderson raised the case of Parkland Village in Minster where residents were being made to leave their homes for two months because of planning regulations.

He said: "These residents are being forced, under threat of prosecution, to leave perfectly good-quality bungalows that have full building regulations and energy standards approved by the local authority's building control section. They are being encouraged to move into hotel accommodation, such as that offered by the hotel situated on the same site as the bungalows they own.

"Such a policy is beyond parody, but I do not blame my local authority; I blame a planning system that has allowed such illogical action."

Changes to rape retraction rules welcomed by CPS chief

NEW guidelines on the treatment of people who withdraw allegations of rape have been welcomed by Kent's chief crown prosecutor, ***writes Marijke Cox***.

Roger Coe-Salazar gave his backing to a series of changes for the Crown Prosecution Service procedure; with a key element about dealing with retractions of rape accusations.

It follows recent court rulings which exposed failings in cases where abuse victims had been scared into dropping claims and then charged with perverting the course of justice.

Merits

The new guidance looks to explore the issues behind a retraction by putting in place stringent measures before a prosecutor considering pressing charges can proceed.

Mr Coe-Salazar said: "In the new year the CPS will be consulting with charities and organisations, with expertise on sexual offences and other violent crimes, as to how and when we charge individuals with the serious offence of perverting the course of justice; particularly when a rape complainant is suspected of falsely retracting his or her allegation.

"Prosecuting a rape complainant for perverting the course of justice is unusual and approval is required at the highest level before any prosecution will commence."

The move is part of a shake-up within the CPS which includes improving the quality of communication with victims and introducing assurance measures which will require the CPS to monitor the handling of cases involving women who have been treated violently.

Another factor being addressed is stereotypes about victims' behaviour; for example if they were drunk or dressed in a particular way when they were raped.

Director of public prosecutions Keir Starmer said cases should be judged entirely on the merits of evidence.

Mr Coe-Salazar said he will ensure prosecutors will make decisions based on the merits of evidence.

"There can be no room for decisions based on the assumption that a jury might hold certain misconceptions due to ignorant stereotyping," he added.

He stressed that prosecution of rape would remain a principle priority for CPS Kent and that budget cuts would not affect the quality of specialist rape prosecutors.

"We have invested considerable resources and effort in ensuring that we apply the highest levels of professional competence to not only the prosecution of such cases, but, in particular, providing the right level of support to victims," he said.

"Rape is one of the cruellest and most degrading offences, and prosecuting it can be difficult.

"Accordingly, we are determined to ensure we continue building on the considerable progress we have made in recent years.

"It is essential the public in Kent have confidence rape victims will be treated sensitively and their attackers will be prosecuted robustly."

Mr Coe-Salazar said he would be closely monitoring communication between lawyers and complainants to ensure everyone could understand proceedings.

Invaluable

He added: "Much of our progress in prosecuting rape cases has been informed by engagement with the voluntary organisations that do so much fabulous work in this area.

"Due to the humbling bravery of rape victims who have been willing to share with us their experience of going through the criminal justice system, we have also had the invaluable opportunity of hearing and taking on board their views.

"Let me reassure you, I have a strong team of highly trained and experienced prosecutors and paralegal officers.

"But, as always, there is room for improvement and I am not in the least bit complacent about this."



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21-year-old jailed for raid on garage

A ROBBER held up two security guards in Greenhithe before making off with a pair of empty cash cassettes.

Harley Webb, 21, from Plumstead, south-east London, claimed he had a gun and threatened the men outside the Esso service station in London Road, on February 8, last year.

He was jailed for three-and-a-half years when he appeared at Maidstone Crown Court on December 23.

Det Con Jan Metherell said: "Security guards going about their daily business should not have to face threats or danger."

Fire service plan

THE consultation on planned changes to Kent Fire and Rescue Service ends later this month.

Under the proposals firefighters may no longer attend automatic fire alarms, and fire stations across the county may be closed.

The outcomes of the consultation will be considered at the next meeting of the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority on February 16.

To view the proposals in full visit www.kent.fire-uk.org.

Bridging the gap

ELDERLY people took part in a quiz night with children as part of a 'Bridging the Gap' event in Gravesend.

About 45 people aged between eight and 90 took part in the festivities, organised by Kent Police and Gravesend council in response to the two generations admitting they did not understand each other.

PC Sarah Lewis said: "It was good to see how well the youngsters and older people were enjoying each other's company."

Pair jailed for causing fatal pile-up on M2

By **JON COATES**

TWO men have been sentenced to a total of 11 years in prison for causing death by dangerous driving in an road accident last year.

Police described the crash on July 31, 2009, as a "catastrophic chain of events" which saw the victim die as his car became a fireball.

Edward Parker, a 51-year-old company director, of Sportsman's Cottages, Kings Hill, received seven years in prison, was disqualified from driving for seven years, and ordered to pay £3,500 costs.

David Steele, a 55-year-old retired businessman, of Dane Close, Hartlip, was jailed for four years, disqualified from driving for six years, and ordered to pay £1,000 costs.

The crash happened just after 5pm when Jim Molloy, 58, from Broadstairs, was driving coastbound along the M2 between junctions three and four in Medway.

A police spokesman said: "He was returning home from work at the time when a car driven by Parker ploughed into the back of him. This caused Mr Molloy to lose control and triggered a catastrophic chain of events that resulted in five vehicles becoming involved in the collision.

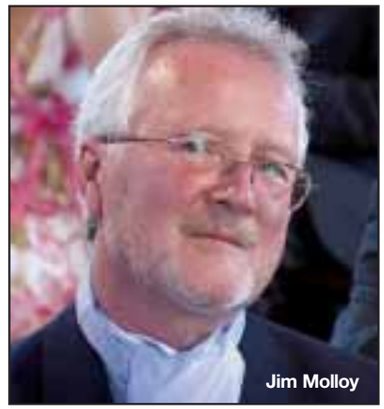




DISREGARD: David Steele (left) and Edward Parker were jailed for causing fatal crash

"Mr Molloy's car subsequently struck a lorry before hitting the central reservation and catching fire. Incredibly, four men pulled Mr Molloy from his burning car without regard for their own safety, but attempts to resuscitate him were unsuccessful."

Witnesses told Lewes Crown Ccourt the high-powered cars being driven by Steele and Parker appeared to be travelling at between 120-140mph and close to each other before the collision.



Jim Molloy

Serious Collision Investigation Unit officer Ian Malcolm said: "We are satisfied with the sentences, but the outcome will never bring back Mr Molloy. A normal working day ended in tragedy as a result of the complete disregard by Steele and Parker for the law and other road users and, indeed, their own safety.

"These men will be free at the end of their sentences, but Mr Molloy's loved ones will never fully recover from losing a husband, father and grandfather."

A statement from Mr Molloy's family said: "Jim was a truly wonderful man, full of love and compassion, who was the head of our very close family. He made us all feel very loved and secure.

"Our family life before his death was filled with laughter, jokes and fun times, but now it is hard not to focus on the way he died and that when we are together he is always missing. We grieve for him and for the life we all once had."

Mr Molloy worked with adults with learning disabilities and was dedicated to helping them fulfil their potential.

Pothole crews expanded to hit the roads running

EXTRA road crews have been drafted in to tackle potholes left by the recent cold snap.

Kent County Council has added 12 work gangs to operate alongside 33 teams already fixing the roads.

Cabinet member for highways Cllr Nick Chard said the gangs will aim to make permanent first-time repairs, where possible.

"Every winter potholes form as a result of ice in the road freezing and thawing," he said. "This can be very damaging, depending on how bad the weather is. We are ready to hit the ground running this year, increasing the number of pothole crews.

"In early spring we will take stock of how much damage has been caused and whether further action is required."

Last year KCC brought in small and medium-sized local firms in a six-month 'find and fix' campaign which cost £6.5 million, including £2.4m received in the March, 2010, government budget, following the harshest winter in 30 years.

Last year's big freeze opened thousands of potholes, where water and snow had seeped inside cracks, then froze and expanded, cracking the road surface as it did so. Crews fixed 31,000 potholes.

Cllr Chard said: "We made an enormous investment last summer and did an enormous amount of repairs to roads. They were absolutely first class, quality repairs.

"We are confident the potholes we repaired then will stand up to the conditions."



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Pensioner loses £6k in roof con

TRADING Standards is investigating after rogue traders conned a 92-year-old into paying more than £6,000 for roof repairs.

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This is Margate contest entries impress

Elite photo judge more than Parr for the course

By **MARIJKE COX**
marijke.cox@kosmedia.co.uk

ACCLAIMED photographer Martin Parr has become the latest creative icon to help with the revival of one of the county's former tourist hotspots.

The self-proclaimed "aficionado of the British seaside", who is a member of the elite Magnum photography group, paid a visit to Thanet to announce the winner of This is Margate, a competition used to showcase the town.


Martin Parr

Hundreds of entries were whittled down to six in a public vote and the eventual winner, Jacqueline Marshall, was announced by Parr. Pictures from the finalists will be used for postcards to promote the town in 2011.

Parr, who became a member of Magnum Photos – an international cooperative owned by its members – in 1994 after a long selection process, said he was impressed with the standard of work. But he added it was important for the public to choose the winner.

"What the public may vote for may not be what I would vote for," he said. "It's community art at its best, seeing the town they know and love on show."

The 58-year-old chose an additional winner himself out of the entrants; a photograph of a silver teapot at the Walpole Bay Hotel in Cliftonville, by Gerardo Calia.


ABOVE PARR: Gerardo Calia's teapot shot


BEST SHOT: Jacqueline Marshall's winner

"It's a timeless image from a hotel which has been there for 150 years, a real Margate institution," he said. "It gave a glimpse into secret Margate."

Surrey-born Parr, who carried out a fashion shoot at the Walpole Bay Hotel in 2009, said he enjoyed photographing Britain, particularly the seaside.

"Margate went into decline and there was decay, but it's about to turn a corner," he said. "There is Dreamland and the Turner Contemporary. This is Margate's renaissance. It almost burned out, but things are about to change."

Parr, who has been in the industry for 40 years, said photography had changed due to the internet and different attitudes in society.

"It was in the doldrums for a while, but now all big galleries want to show photography," he said. "It has grown hugely and changed dra-

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DUSK: Margate pier by Daniel McClarren



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TOE THE LINE: Tim Stubbings' happy feet

matically. This is Margate, for example, invites the whole community to contribute."

Of Magnum Photos, he said: "There are about 50 members and it's very elitist. I became a member in 1994 but started the process in 1989. There are different levels to go through. You get voted in by your peers."

This is Margate attracted about 400 entries from people in Kent and some from London.

More than 1,000 votes were cast by the public over eight days. All photos entered will be used in a photographic library to showcase Margate and images from the finalists will be used on postcards.



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'Virtual courts will rush to judgement'

By **MARIJKE COX**
marijke.cox@kosmedia.co.uk

A MOTORISTS' group has voiced concerns over the use of a new 'virtual' court system for drink-driving offences.

Brian MacDowell, secretary of the Kent branch of the Association of British Drivers (ABD), said although the organisation supported fair enforcement of road traffic laws, it believed the justice process should suit the offence.

"People charged with drink driving are liable to penalties with life-changing consequences, including imprisonment, so it is important they have time to consider their position carefully without feeling they are under pressure to accept 'virtual justice'," he said.

"Traditional courts offer a proper consideration of the circumstances. Justice must not become a computer game to be downloaded at the press of a button. People should be given a genuine choice, at a vulnerable time, between rubber-stamp justice and a traditional court hearing."

Last month, Kent Police introduced the new system in Medway, Gravesham and Dartford. Anyone caught under the influence has their case heard at North Kent police station, which is connected to Medway Magistrates' Court by video link.

The force said it meant drink-drivers could be arrested, charged and given their punishment immediately, meaning they could be off the road within 24 hours. In five recent drink-driving arrests occurring the week before Christmas, four were disqualified from driving with immediate effect after appearing at the virtual court.

Usually people are bailed for 15 days to appear before magistrates and are still permitted to drive during that time.

Assistant Chief Constable Gary Beautridge said: "The virtual courts system means we can take drink-drivers off the road straight away, rather than having to wait for the case to be heard. It means someone arrested and charged in the morning could be dealt with and banned by the afternoon.

Custody

"The fastest drink-drive case dealt with by the virtual court took place in just over two hours, from charge to being disqualified."

But Mr MacDowell said the ABD did not think it was appropriate.

"The police have the option in serious cases to hold someone in custody and take them to court the next day. Then an interim driving ban may be applied," he said.

"However, the ABD has concerns over interim driving bans [for non-serial offenders], as should the case be dismissed, punishment may be incurred even though there was no offence committed."

Solicitors have also expressed doubts over the system claiming it hinders their ability to conduct confidential discussions with their clients once the court session is in process.

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River high on UK list of the most polluted

A WATERWAY flowing into one of Kent's rivers has been listed among the most contaminated in Britain, ***writes Marijke Cox.***

The Little Stour, which flows into the main Great Stour at Plucks Gutter, near Stourmouth in Canterbury, was included in a list of "sensitive" rivers by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

Although first designated in 2007 after the Environment Agency found high levels of the pollutant nutrient phosphorous, as well as excessive plant growth – known as eutrophication – it has yet to be removed from the list.

Discharge

A Kent spokesman for the Environment Agency said the discharge of treated sewage from Dambridge sewage treatment works into the Wingham River – a tributary of the Little Stour – was identified as the main source of the pollution.

"To help reduce eutrophication the sewage treatment works will receive nutrient stripping facilities, due to be completed by September, 2014," he said.

"Our river monitoring information shows very low levels of the nutrient phosphorus originate in the Little Stour upstream of its confluence with the Wingham River – the area where over-pumping has taken place."

The register – which includes more than 100 rivers – also includes the River Great Stour, which runs from Sandwich estuary to near Ashford.

Water companies in England and Wales no longer have to tell the public how much raw sewage they discharge into rivers.

A spokesman at Protect Kent, a local branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England, said there needed to be more transparency.

He said: "The public should definitely be told exactly how much raw sewage gets pumped into the rivers which run through their beautiful countryside.

"If there really is a need to pump sewage into the rivers, then the least the water companies can do is make us all aware of it.

"It shows a grave disregard for the public to do this without any kind of clarity."

But the Environment Agency spokesman said river quality had steadily improved over the last 20 years and newer stringent EU standards were in place.

He said: "The improvements have been achieved through investment by water companies, tougher action on polluters, reduction in discharges from industry and businesses, changing farming practices and thousands of local projects.

"The return of wildlife including otters and salmon to rivers demonstrates the tangible benefit this provides for wildlife and for people, but we are not complacent.

"The Environment Agency is committed to tackling diffuse pollution and will be working with community groups, river trusts and wildlife and angling organisations that all have important roles to play in improving waterways."

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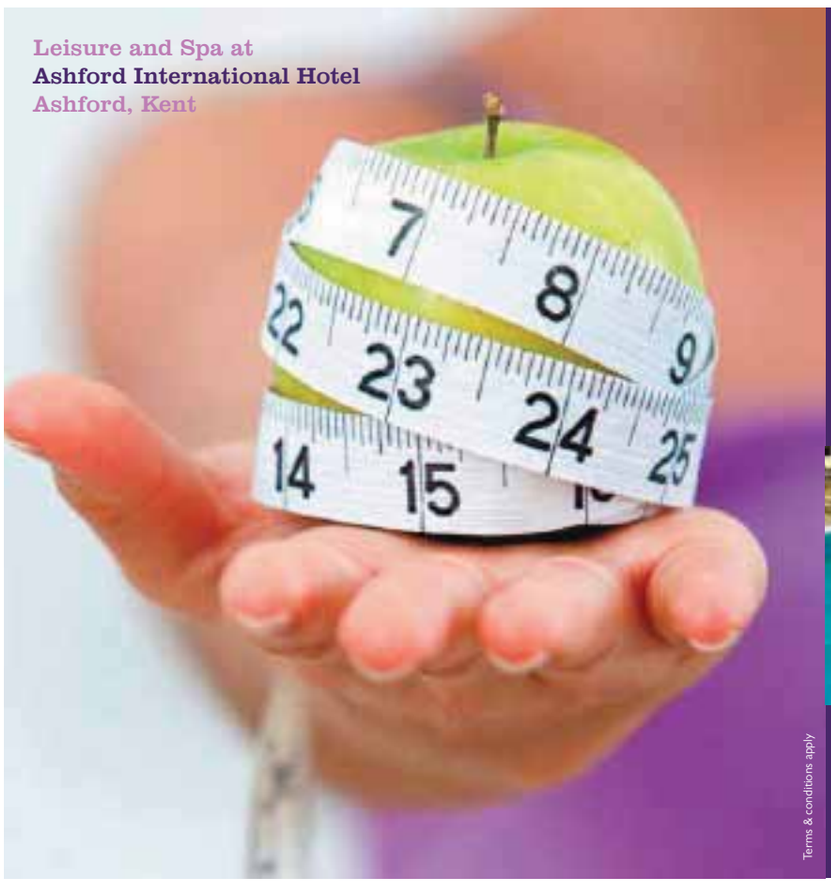
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Monks' move ends 150 years in Kent

By **STEVE KNIGHT**
steve.knight@kosmedia.co.uk

MONKS based in Kent for 150 years have been forced to leave the county in favour of a cheaper home in Surrey.

Benedictine monks have resided at St Augustine's Abbey, Ramsgate, since it was constructed in 1861, but spiralling repair and maintenance costs resulted in the historic building being put up for sale.

The 11-strong community announced their decision to leave in October, 2009, at about the same time the Surrey-based Order of Friars Minor made public their own plans to leave Chilworth Friary on the outskirts of Guildford.



OLD HOME: St Augustine's in Ramsgate

Fortunate

Dom Paulinus Greenwood, the abbot of St Augustine's, said: "We have been extremely fortunate in finding a suitable new home within such a relatively short time and will always be grateful to the Franciscans for alerting us to the availability of their Friary.

"Since making the difficult decision to move from Ramsgate we have been encouraged and supported by the goodwill, prayers and benefactions of many people, and we do not forget them.

"We feel this is God's will for our community and we hope to forge ahead in the coming months to re-establish our monastic life and witness in this beautiful, tranquil setting."

The first monks arrived in Ramsgate from the Italian monastery of Subiaco in 1856, with St Augustine's Abbey built for them by Edward Pugin, son of renowned Gothic-revival architect Augustus Pugin.

They successfully evangelised much of the coastal region of Kent, establishing all but one of Thanet's Catholic parishes while acting as chaplains to the region's numerous convents of nuns and religious sisters.

Father Michael Copps, minister provincial of the Friars Minor, said his men were sad to be leaving Chilworth Friary.

He added: "I had been thinking with horror that it might become a hotel or a health spa, until I was shown information on the internet that the Benedictines had decided to leave Ramsgate and look for a smaller monastery. Reading their wish list for the place they were looking for, I saw that Chilworth ticked nearly all the boxes."





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Author's tales of political madness

ELECTIONS may not be regarded as being especially humorous affairs, but one man has scoured the globe to discover scores of exceptions to the rule, ***writes Chris Murphy***.

Phil Mason, from Hempstead, Gillingham, searched out some of the most oddball political happenings for his new book called Dead Man Wins Election.

And that title is not just wishful thinking – Americans voted in a new senator despite the fact he died three weeks before polling day.

Civil servant Phil said he was fascinated with the way politics is carried out across the globe and wanted to take a closer look at the more bizarre side of it.

Dead Man Wins Election uncovers the least competent politicians, the most outlandish government decisions and some of the strangest elections the world has seen.

There was the world's most unsuccessful politician who lost an impressive 103 elections. Plus the residents of Sunol, California, who shunned two human candidates to elect a local dog as their mayor.

And it's not just elections – locals in a Colorado town named a new bridge 'Bob'.

Odd things can happen in the UK too. The local council responsible for the A494 in North Wales installed temporary traffic lights when a gorge collapsed. They were finally withdrawn after the road repair in August, 1999 – 28 years after the accident.



CATCHLINE: Phil Mason

And to overcome spending limits in India's 1996 general election, the People's Party in Bihar released thousands of native green parrots that had been trained to chant its election slogan.

Phil is the man behind the other oddball history books Napoleon's Haemorrhoids, What Needled Cleopatra? and the bestselling Mission Accomplished!

But his first love is politics and the way those who live it can mess things up.

He said: "I wanted to show a quirky sense of history when it comes to politics. I want to challenge the sense of faith people put in politicians. There are heaps of reasons why people should be very nervous about putting our national institutions in their hands.

"What we are trying to show is politics tends to attract unlikely people that you wouldn't normally put in charge of something important."

• Dead Man Wins Election is priced at £14.99.



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STAYING: Poster of Mr Marino's wife

Crimper's saucy wife posters win planning battle

A HAIRDRESSER has won a council planning dispute after being told to take down two billboards showing his wife's cleavage and bottom, ***writes Stian Alexander.***

Stylist Marcello Marino was warned he risked being fined by Thanet District Council after placing two 7ft by 4ft posters of his 28-year-old Cuban wife Yaice outside his salon in Ramsgate.

But after six months the 41-year-old snipper was finally told the council had backed down and would allow him to keep the posters, despite his salon being in a conservation area.

Exposed

Mr Marino, who runs Marcello's Hair Salon, put his first poster up in June, showing his wife exposing her cleavage.

Some locals loved the image, but the Ramsgate Society reported Mr Marino to Thanet council for "lowering the tone" of the area.

Mr Marino responded to council complaints with a new poster showing his wife tied up with silk rope and baring her rear.

He said: "All I am trying to do is drum up trade. I told the council there is a garage nearby that has banners all over the place.

"People love the posters and, of course, my wife looks great. When they told me to take down the one showing her cleavage I got angry and responded by putting one up showing her bum. That put the cat among the pigeons, but now they have seen sense and allowed me to keep them both."

The Ramsgate Society had reported the salon to planners after receiving complaints that the original poster lowered the tone and was offensive to women.

Chairman Jocelyn McCarthy said: "Women found it offensive and disgusting and asked me why he had been allowed to put something like this up."

Planning chiefs ordered Mr Marino to remove the images, saying he had not applied for planning permission, but have now backed down and allowed him to retain the posters.

A letter to Mr Marino from Thanet council reads: "Thanet District Council has granted express consent for the retention of two banners to side elevations."

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Winter checks to keep schools open

EDUCATION chiefs have assured every effort will be made to keep schools open as the icy weather continues into the new year.

Kent County Council revised its winter guidance earlier this year to help head-teachers and governors make advanced preparations so they can open as usual.

Cabinet member for education Cllr Sarah Hohler said: "The guidance provides a step-by-step checklist to help schools prepare for the winter. Their efforts are supported by Kent Highway Services and others who strive to keep the nearby roads and paths cleared and salted.

"In the past, where schools opened and children were not able to get in, this reflected badly on the school's attendance figures.

"I'm pleased that issue has been clarified by the Coalition Government and that schools will be recognised and not penalised for doing their bit to keep schools open."

"We rely on our headteachers and governing body chairmen to make the right decision for their school.

"In exceptionally bad weather, closure is the only option and we fully understand this. I know every effort is made to keep schools open."

Callous thief jailed for preying on his vulnerable 'friend'

A TRAITOR who repeatedly stole from a vulnerable man he befriended has been jailed for three-and-a-half years.

By **STEVE KNIGHT**

Adam Roberts, 23, from Dartford, betrayed his 41-year-old victim by taking belongings from his house while pretending to check up on him.

He then sold the items on while also borrowing money he never intended to pay back.

The victim, who suffers from learning difficulties, failed to report some of the thefts because he failed to understand how people he considered to be his friends could steal from him.

Roberts was sentenced at Maidstone Crown Court on Monday, December 20, having earlier pleaded guilty to two counts of burglary. Another man involved in the case will be sentenced later this month.

Det Con Richard Olley, who led the investigation, said: "All officers involved were appalled by the way the offenders systematically stole from someone as vulnerable as this victim.

"Adams claimed to be the victim's friend and that he was looking after him, when in reality he was taking advantage for his own financial gain."

Adams was arrested on Sunday, August 29, and charged with a burglary committed earlier that day as well as one the previous Wednesday.



PRETENCE: Adam Roberts pleaded guilty

DC Olley added: "We are pleased with the length of the sentence handed down and pleased the judge decided to use the upper end of the scale.

"This sentencing ensures that an offender who uses such appalling tactics is locked away from these vulnerable victims."

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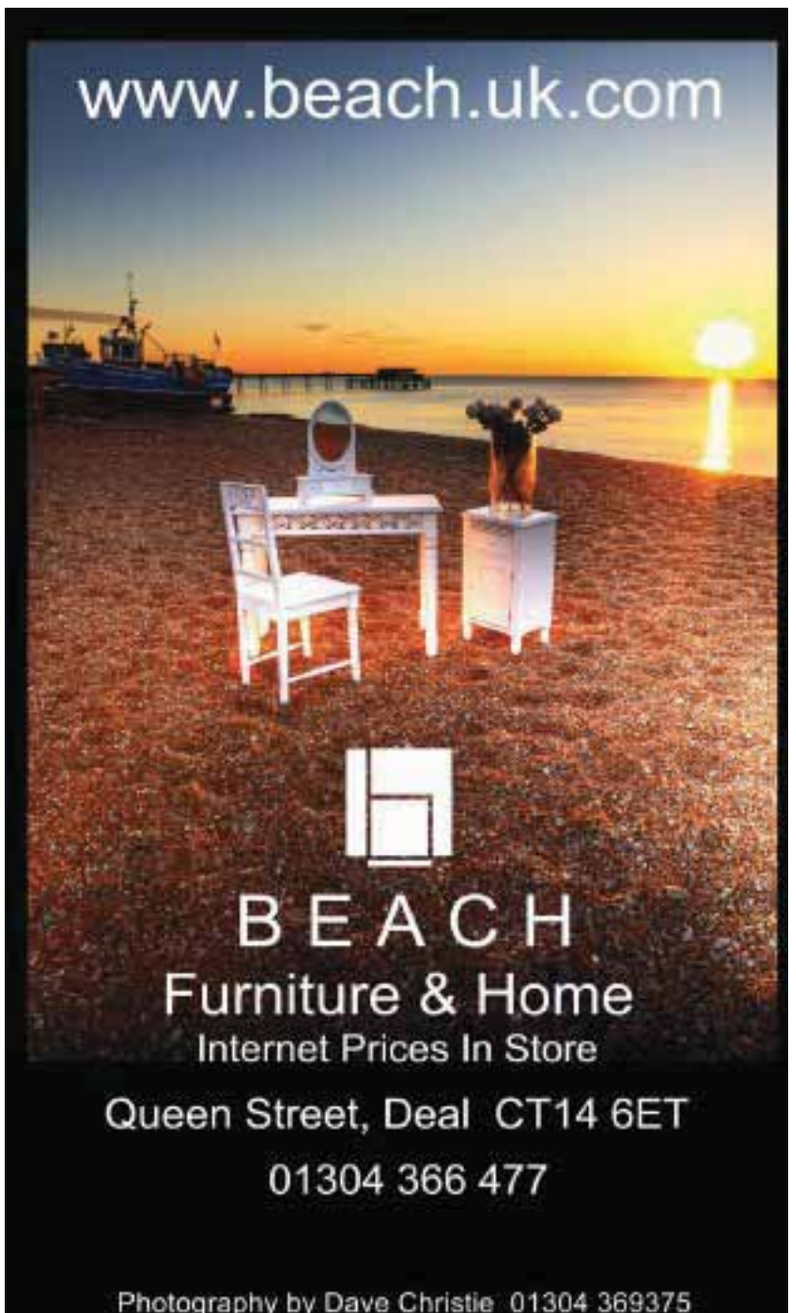
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Treatment a possible end to the varicose vein pain

By **MARIJKE COX**
marijke.cox@kosmedia.co.uk

A LEADING surgeon has introduced a new medical technique to the UK which could spell the end of the dreaded varicose vein.

The unsightly problem affects one third of the population, with sufferers forced to undergo painful procedures to have them removed and surgery often needed again years later.

But Eddie Chalonor, who works at the private Chelsfield Park Hospital in Orpington and the Sloane Hospital in Beckenham, is offering a new, quick and painless technique, also carried out on NHS patients, which could mean an end to varicose veins.

"In the past people have had to go under general anaesthetic to have them removed," he said. "The reoccurrence rate at five years is 30 per cent.

"Eight years ago I became the first surgeon in London to use a laser technique which burns the vein from the inside – but it's painful. The reoccurrence rate is lower at seven per cent at five years."

But health experts believe the new procedure, called Clarivein, could revolutionise varicose vein surgery with patients only needing one course of treatment.

Mr Chalonor said Clarivein, which is already used in the United States and said to be painless, damages the vein by injecting a drug to stop it functioning.

Receptive

A rotating catheter is used to cut the lining of the vein to make it more receptive to the drug.

"It takes five minutes in treatment time, about 20 minutes in total with everything set up. It's very quick," he said.

Mr Chaloner, who is the first surgeon in the UK to use the treatment, said although it was difficult to confirm reoccurrence rates for Clarivein – which has only been in use for 18 months – experts predict it could be lower than rival techniques.

The surgeon, who also works at NHS hospitals in London, had just seen a patient who underwent the procedure two weeks ago.

"The veins have gone – there is no bruising and no scarring," he said.

Varicose veins, which are usually found in the calf, commonly affect women who have had children, but on rare occasions young people, even teenagers, have had them removed. Men can also be affected.

They are caused when the one-way valves in veins fail and blood flows back, causing them to bulge and swell.

If they are not treated, in later years people can suffer complications such as eczema or skin ulcers.

Mr Chalonor said: "Varicose veins are not a risk where people have to be treated straight away, but if they are left this can lead to other problems, such as ulceration.

"In the short term they are not dangerous, but over long periods can damage the skin."

For information about treatment go to www.radiancehealth.co.uk.

News and sport updated daily online
www.kentnews.co.uk

POLICE have charged two men with murder after the death of a man in Gravesend. Officers were called to an address in South Street at about 2.30pm on Saturday, December 18.

Damien Karkut, 24, and Artur Kozlowski, 30, were both charged the following Tuesday and remanded in custody to appear at Maidstone Crown Court on Friday, January 7.

SOUTH East Water has been tackling hundreds of burst water mains caused by the icy weather. The second week of December alone saw staff called out to 137 incidents across the region. A spokesman said: "Mains can burst as a result of movement as the ground freezes and thaws. We anticipate the number of bursts will remain high and urge customers to be patient during this busy time."

A DYING dog was resuscitated by firefighters who went into a burning bungalow to save her.

Charlotte, a Jack Russell, was trapped in her elderly owner's home at Worth, near Deal, after the kitchen caught light on December 22.

The pet was unconscious when firefighters reached her but was revived with the use of an oxygen mask. The terrier's owner was unharmed.

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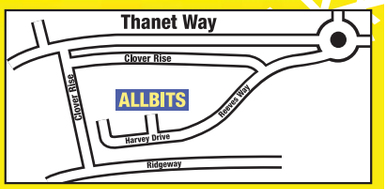
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A year of lights, camera, location

FROM Robert Downey Jr to the cast of the Inbetweeners, Kent has enjoyed a fantastic year of filming for movies and television.

The Kent Film Office – run by the county council – has generated more than £14 million in the four years since it was set up. That success was added to in 2010 with the introduction of a unique bill that allows KCC to close roads for film shoots.

Among TV shows recorded in the county this year were Poirot, Sea Patrol UK and Albert's Memorial (Dover); Alan Davies' Teenage Revolution (Deal, Canterbury and Whitstable); Great British Railways with Michael Portillo (Deal, Margate and Chatham); and Four Weddings (Pluckley, Maidstone and Teynham). Scenes from the Inbetweeners were shot in Dartford, while Walkers crisps (Sandwich) and Morrisons adverts were also based in Kent.

The coming 12 months will see the release of more Hollywood blockbusters partly filmed in Kent and, while details are under wraps, it is believed parts of Sherlock Holmes 2 were shot at Chatham Dockyard.

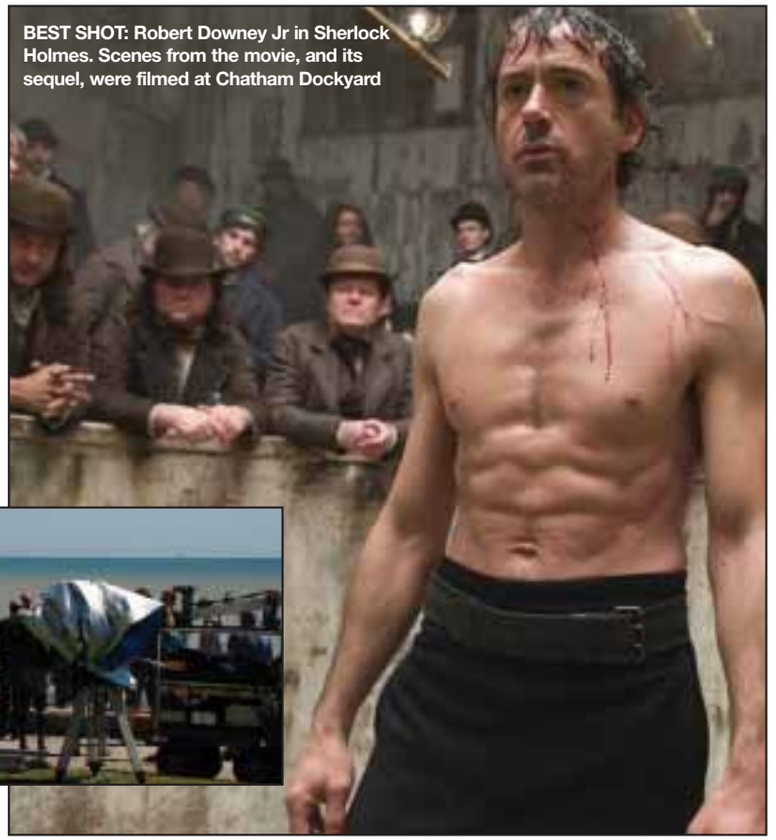
Other Hollywood names to have filmed in Kent in the past include Natalie Portman, Scarlett Johansson and Eric Bana (The Other Boleyn Girl); Reese Witherspoon (Vanity Fair); and Daniel Craig (Golden Compass).

KCC cabinet member for regeneration Cllr Kevin Lynes said: "Film is important for the Kent economy and we're committed to nurturing the industry and making our county a national and international contender."



Picture: ©ITV plc

ON THE CASE: David Suchet as Poirot



BEST SHOT: Robert Downey Jr in Sherlock Holmes. Scenes from the movie, and its sequel, were filmed at Chatham Dockyard



Picture: LIS CLUCAS/TIM ANDERSON, CHANNEL 4

OUT OF THE WOODS: The Inbetweeners



ON LOCATION: Poirot cast and crew at St Margaret's Bay, Dover

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Revelations at St Mary's dig

THE remains of an ancient chapel have been discovered within the nave of St Mary the Virgin Church in Ashford, ***writes Ed Hill***.

The foundations of the early Norman chapel are thought to date from the late 11th century. Archaeologists are excavating the floor as part of refurbishment works to the church's interior.

Canterbury Archaeological Trust's Andy Linklater is supervising the dig. He said: "While a church at Ashford is mentioned in the Domesday Book [circa 1086], its exact whereabouts had been, until now, largely speculative. Though we would expect continuity of a consecrated site, hard evidence is always better than folklore or supposition."

St Mary's is undergoing a facelift to improve worship for churchgoers and widen the church's role as an arts centre.

Work on the £1.7 million makeover began in October. The Church of England is refurbishing the parish church with new seating, lights and performance area, more toilets and improved access and entrances.

Because of the extent of the groundwork, almost the entire west end of the nave floor has been made available for examination.

Mr Linklater said: "The project has enabled us to examine the foundations and led us to reassess the development of the church. The present St Mary's has always been regarded as being a single phase of construction, instigated by Sir John Fogge, towards the close of the 15th century. The western half underwent at least two phases of enlargement during the 19th century. Now the footprint of a smaller, possibly early Norman, church has been uncovered beneath the nave."

The Norman church can be identified by the masonry wall foundation and a robber trench, aligned between the two aisle arcades. Work on St Mary's is expected to finish in summer 2011.



DISCOVERY: Excavations at St Mary's have revealed evidence of an early Norman chapel

Fast and loose wheel raiders

A PORSCHE owner received a nasty surprise when all four wheels were stolen from his prized possession.

The black car had been left on the edge of a field in Borden, near Sittingbourne, after an accident.

Thieves jacked it up and stole the wheels – valued at £5,000 – between 9.30pm on Monday, December 20, and 1am the next morning.

Anyone with information is asked to call police on 01795 419182, quoting reference CY/020131/10, or the free and confidential Crimestoppers line, 0800 555111.

Seasonal stress

A THIRD of shoppers in Medway have admitted using physical force or verbal abuse while out Christmas shopping.

According to the online parcel delivery service myhermes.co.uk, a further quarter of those surveyed said they had lost their temper over what they later regarded as an insignificant incident.

The most annoying experience for shoppers is people being rude and impatient (30 per cent) followed by people pushing in front of them and long queues at the tills (both 27 per cent).

Furry friends in need of owners

A REHOMING service for small animals is appealing for rat-lovers to come forward after two domestic rodents created a family of 12 over Christmas.

Kent-based Cavy Rescue is warning people to check the gender of animals before they buy them to ensure they do not pair a male and female together.

Co-founder Stella Hulott said: "We hope rat-lovers will be able to offer these furries a new and happy life."

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Fire tragedy memorial design wins approval

By **STEVE KNIGHT**
steve.knight@kosmedia.co.uk

DESIGNS for a memorial to mark the location of a public fire display that went tragically wrong have been approved by planning chiefs.

Nine adults and six children burned to death during the Gillingham Park stunt in July, 1929, when a blaze started by the town's firefighters raged out of control and ripped apart the makeshift house they were supposed to be rescued from.

And now, following a campaign by a relative of one of those who perished, Medway Council has agreed to place a memorial bearing the names of the victims at the scene of the disaster.

Canadian dental hygienist Lori Oschefski, 50, said: "I am very happy that the memorial for the fireman's tragedy has finally been agreed upon.

Attraction

"The design is a fitting tribute to the lives that were lost in this tragedy. It will include all 15 names of those who perished and will also tell their story.

"Having this memorial in the park will ensure they will always be remembered."

The Fireman's Wedding display was a popular annual attraction at Gillingham Park and would culminate every year with the fire brigade 'rescuing' volunteers from a three-storey structure cobbled together with beams for the frame and a tarpaulin for the walls.



DESIGN: Artist's impression of how the Gillingham Park memorial will look

It was rigged to catch fire, but on the day of the tragedy the flammable liquids ignited too early and spectators were confronted with the horror of many of the children and adults burning or jumping to their deaths.

One of those killed was 12-year-old Navy cadet Eric Cheeseman, who Mrs Oschefski later discovered was the nephew of her grandfather, William Cheeseman.

After a public vote, the memorial decided upon features two-dimensional images of a fireman and child standing back-to-back either side of the list of names.

Mrs Oschefski said: "This news could not have come at a better time, being the holiday season. It's a time for remembering loved ones, and this memorial is in keeping with that sentiment.

"I'm looking forward to returning to England to see the memorial in place."



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LETTERS

KOS Media welcomes your comments and letters for publication. Please send correspondence to: Letters to the Editor, KOS Media, Apple Barn, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6SS. Alternatively fax them to: 01303 817001, or email them to editorial@kosmedia.co.uk. Please include your name and address, although these will be withheld in exceptional circumstances. Please also include a daytime telephone number for verification (this will not be published). We reserve the right to edit letters.

LETTER OF THE WEEK

Blight eating up our countryside

Congratulations to Gravesham council leader Mike Snelling for voicing his objections to the proposed lower Thames crossing, east of Gravesend.

I get fed up with businesses and government coming up with these schemes, which they label as regeneration. Far from being regeneration, it is outright vandalism when areas of outstanding natural beauty and sites of scientific interest are threatened and sometimes despoiled by concrete and steel.

The spread of concrete and blight in the South East and particularly north Kent is very worrying.

A balance needs to be struck between the countryside's needs and business needs.

Unfortunately business means more money and knows no bounds, and it spreads like a cancer eating up more and more countryside. If another crossing is sited here then how much longer before yet another is considered? The voices against this proposed vandalism must not weaken. Protection needs to be strengthened for these vulnerable areas.

Mr C Aitken, Hoo

Stop the pursuit of nuclear folly

Kent Green Party rejects the idea that new nuclear power stations are needed to supply the energy needs of Kent and Medway.

Reducing energy use by improving efficiency and insulation is cost-effective and can create local jobs everywhere in Kent. Increasing the use of safe, renewable technologies including wind, solar, heat pumps and biomass can help to prevent us importing coal, oil and gas.

Kent Green Party urges people to write to their MP about Early Day Motion 557.

This Commons motion, already signed by Green Party leader Caroline Lucas, is calling on the Government to reconsider its support for nuclear power.

We reject the idea of using higher energy prices to subsidise new nuclear power station building. The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority is already getting £1.6 billion a year from the Government; the liabilities of the nuclear industry had already reached an estimated £160bn by 2006.

Kent Green Party believes many useful jobs can be created to improve our energy use in Kent. Investing in yesterday's polluting solutions to today's problems will not help.

Hazel Dawe, Kent Green Party

Maverick's last musical stand

When I first became interested in country music, in 1994, there was a dedicated TV channel, BBC Two screened the Country Music Awards each year, there was a UK Country Music Radio Station and a wealth of magazines. First we lost the TV station, then the radio station, then Country Music International magazine closed and the BBC dropped the CMA. Just when it seemed the end for the UK country music fan along came a new magazine called Maverick.

Now with the January, 2011, printed edition being their last copy sent to subscribers, I again wonder what's next for country music fans.

Maverick have done everything they can to widen circulation but with the economic downturn many have not renewed subscriptions and falling audiences for small country music shows have confirmed the loss of audience at these great and intimate venues.

It seems amazing that many reformed bands can tour and fill massive venues, most theatres are full most of the time, and yet up-and-coming talented singer-songwriters are sometimes playing to half-filled or near-empty venues, which is causing the closure of venues and promoters withdrawing their support as they are losing too much money. For years now Alan Cackett has battled to put on shows in and around Maidstone and to get his magazine to the masses, but now after this month there will be no more printed editions of his magazine and no more concerts.

When people are being more careful with money subscriptions are often the first to be cancelled.

If like me you don't want to have a computerised Maverick magazine download and prefer a hard copy to read, there is only Country Music People and Up Country available in printed format to purchase by subscription. Sad but true.

Mr D Wiffen, Bexley

There's no sport in this barbarity

Boxing Day hunts and shoots are nothing but an anachronism in civilised society.

Our wildlife deserves better treatment than it gets at the hands of hunters and shooters in their festive season outings.

Gentle and beautiful creatures are being hunted and shot at and used as live targets for blood sports, all in the name of 'tradition'. Our investigators and hunt monitors were out in force over the festive season to try to capture any illegal activity on camera so it can be presented to the police and people can be held accountable.

We are a rural equivalent of Neighbourhood Watch.

It is high time there was legislation which made it a crime to be cruel to any animal, whether wild, farmed or domestic.

Using an animal as a target is barbaric and should have no place in civilised society. Readers can help stop animal cruelty in the name of 'sport' by calling our Hunt Crimewatch line on 01483 524250.

Douglas Batchelor, chief executive, League Against Cruel Sports

Another stamp of disapproval

With so many politicians from all persuasions keen to give our country to the EU and sell off its assets to foreign interests, you have to wonder whether they have a vested interest in this nation's demise.

The latest in the great UK sale is Royal Mail. It would appear there is so little confidence in British management, that they are believed to be so inept, there is no alternative other than to sell Royal Mail to the highest foreign bidder.

They will then carry through the measures necessary to restore Royal Mail to health that homegrown talent apparently has no knowledge of. In the meantime, the towering intellects who treat those who voted for them with such contempt admit they failed to guarantee that the Queen's image on our stamps will survive the sell-off.

Now we know why the country is in such a mess – they couldn't run an eel and whelk stall. That's 170 years of history down the pan.

Commensurate with the status we are now taking on with the world, as everything is sold off, run down or cheapened. Maybe Mickey Mouse would be the best symbol to put on our stamps.

Phil Granger, West Malling

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29

OPINION: IT'S TIME WE ALL GOT A GRIP

Qualified instructor **MITCH PEEKE** believes bad weather training must become a crucial part of driver training if we are to avoid sliding into chaos every winter

I LISTENED intently to BBC Radio Kent during the recent bout of snow. A great debate was taking place on whether or not the county of Kent, and indeed the country as a whole, was coping with the weather.

A lot of people thought not. The railways were blamed for misleading and downright inaccurate information. The police were being alternately praised and blamed, depending upon what each individual caller's experience had been. Kent County Council and the Highways Agency both came in for a lot of criticism about gritting – or the lack of it. Inevitably, the course of the debate turned to how other countries don't seem to become paralysed by two or three inches of snow – such as Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Russia.



Leaving aside the issue of snow ploughs and whether we ought to invest in a huge fleet of them or not, I would like to take this opportunity to further the comparisons that were being proffered into an area that seldom gets looked at – driver training.

I should point out at this juncture that I am a fully qualified driving instructor who, barring one day when my village was cut off by snowdrifts, was out working and teaching in the recent period of snow, covering Medway and Gravesend, with a full diary.

Let's start with the core issue: there is no requirement for anyone taking the UK driving test to have had any training in adverse weather conditions. Currently the only people who get anything like such practice are those who drive emergency service vehicles and bus drivers, who get to do a session in a bus on a skid pan.

Given then that most people actually have no idea how to drive in such weather, is it any wonder the roads become impassable as soon as we have two inches of the white stuff?

This may seem a harsh statement to make, but I am sorry to say that I saw at first hand on every one of the days I was out teaching in those conditions, far too many examples of just how true that statement is. I saw it last winter, too.

I don't know if it's due to the health and safety mentality, or ignorance, or just "can't be bothered to think about it", or even if it's just being overlooked, but it strikes me that we are raising generation upon generation of drivers who can't or won't cope with the weather.

I've heard people moan about the sheer cost of driver training, or else they think the driving test is too tough and too pedantic to be taken seriously. Well, let's just compare the driver training in those countries that are used to snow.

Several other European countries including Denmark, Finland and Norway have a requirement for training under slippery/icy conditions.

Consequently, when you pass the driving test in any of those countries, you know the expected hazards and how to handle the conditions you will face when this type of weather arrives. You will also know what kind of conditions you can't drive in, which is just as important.

Of course, the authorities in those countries have the proper vehicles to help keep their roads clear, but also, knowing that the driving population as a whole has the necessary skills and judgement to handle the conditions anyway, is what keeps those countries moving.

Not having that combination is exactly what paralyses our country. Now I'm sure we've not seen snow for the last time here in England. Next time it arrives and you can't get to work, why not do something constructive?

Give the office a ring and see if basic winter driving lessons are available.You'll be in a proper dual-controlled car, with a fully qualified instructor. It really is a valuable skill and one that will keep you one step ahead in the snow.

Or you could continue to slip, slide sideways, or wheelspin your way into abandoning your car by the roadside and wonder why that driving school car with the learner in it passes you by, safely and smoothly.

You don't have to be a learner driver to learn something valuable.

• ***Mitch Peeke is an instructor with Turn-2-Us Driver Training, based in Medway.***

KOS media COMMENT

Reading last rites on personal touch

JUST as we got used to the self-service checkouts at supermarkets now we're being told we have to do the same in libraries – the one place we thought had yet to be taken over by the technological generation.

But under new plans visitors will be expected to go online, manage their own library fines and swipe out their own books. The only human contact will be if you need pointing in the right direction for a book.

For the younger crowd this may not seem daunting, but for others it's yet another blow to old-fashioned community values where people used to actually speak to each other and life wasn't run by computers.

Asking library visitors to serve themselves is removing even more of that personal contact which is fast disappearing.

If an old or lonely person is no longer talking to a librarian – perhaps one of the only people they speak to that week – then what other human contact will they have?

Technology has transformed the world, but that shouldn't mean casting traditional values aside. These kinds of changes such are designed for the fast-paced country we've become, but not everyone is moving so quickly.

Communities are about people, not computers, and that personal touch is needed just as much as efficiency.

Here's wishing for a better new year

CHRISTMAS is over for another year; the presents have been opened, the turkey leftovers eaten and the decorations are almost ready to be taken down.

Now it's time to welcome in 2011 and say goodbye to a difficult 2010.

So from everybody at Archant KOS Media, we would like to wish our readers a happy and prosperous new year.

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES AND DEATHS

Including family announcements in partnership with the Kent registration service

To register Births, Marriages and Deaths contact the Kent registration service on 0845 824 7400

For advertising announcement enquiries telephone Kent on Sunday on 01303 817150

BIRTHS

BENSON-DARE
Philippa and Gavin celebrate the birth of their daughter Keira Holly Benson-Dare on 30th November 2010 weighing 9lb 4oz.

CROSSLEY
Caroline Fullman and Simon Crossley are pleased to announce the arrival of Georgia Lily Crossley on the 12th December 2010 at Kent and Canterbury Hospital.

MILLER
Penny Charlotte Miller born on 8th November 2010. Daughter to proud parents Steve and Gemma, sister to Archie and Niamh.

PATEL
Timal and Priti would like to announce the birth of their precious bundle of joy Dylan T Patel. Born on the 14th November 2010.

TRUONG
Steve, Gina and Heather celebrate the birth of their new baby Rosa on 23rd November 2010 at Maidstone Hospital.

DEATHS

HACKNEY
Leonard Walter Hackney aged 83 years died on 5th December 2010 after a long illness in Maidstone Hospital. Much loved Father, Grandfather, Great Grandfather and Brother. Funeral Service at Vinters Park Tuesday 21st December 11.45. Flowers from immediate family only donations to John Day Ward Maidstone Hospital please via Paul Rowland Penenden Heath.

POLLARD
Brian John Pollard on the 13th December 2010, aged 84, dearly loved husband to Joan, father to Christopher and grandfather to Alison. Funeral Services at Linton Church at 12 noon on Thursday 23rd December 2010. Only family flowers. The family would wish for donations to be made to the Heart of Kent Hospice.

SARGENT
Regret to announce that Mavis Sargent of Wrotham died peacefully on 13th December 2010. For Funeral arrangements please contact Sears of Barming.

SHARMAN
Gillian Margaret Sharman of Folkestone died peacefully at the Pilgrims Hospice Ashford on the 17th December 2010. Funeral Service at Lyminge Parish Church on 11th January 2011 at 11am. To live in the hearts of those left behind is to live forever.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28

Your generosity is saving lives

Last year saw some of the worst natural disasters in living memory, with millions of lives devastated in Haiti, Chile and Pakistan.

Yet thanks to your readers' generosity the Red Cross is helping make a difference for thousands of people every day.

In the immediate aftermath of the Haiti earthquake, the British Red Cross response supported by millions of pounds from the UK public was huge.

Hundreds of thousands of people have received emergency Red Cross healthcare, vaccinations, clean water and basic sanitation. Hundreds of thousands more have received emergency shelter materials and essential relief supplies.

We are also continuing to respond to the cholera outbreak by supporting medical facilities, carrying out hygiene education activities and establishing cholera treatment centres.

Across the world, and here in the UK, Red Cross volunteers are also responding to thousands of smaller, unreported disasters.

Recent severe weather in the UK has seen our volunteers ferry medical staff to and from hospitals and deliver medicines to people trapped in their homes.

All over the globe volunteers are working in their communities, providing vital relief and also helping build people's resilience so they are prepared should disaster strike again.

The process of rebuilding lives after a crisis can take many years. Your generosity has ensured that the Red Cross can be there for the long term, helping communities wherever they may be.

Sir Nicholas Young, chief executive, British Red Cross

Mopping up the new business

The growth of social networking and smartphones has presented retailers in the South East with an ideal opportunity to grow their businesses over this Christmas and beyond by encouraging their customers to shop through their mobiles.

Mobile shopping (or 'mopping') is big business in the UK. Every week 170,000 Britons spend over £30 through eBay's mobile apps alone.

It's also a trend that's growing at a year-on-year rate of 400 per cent as shoppers learn they can compare prices, try on outfits in virtual changing rooms and pay for their purchases through their phones.

The good news for local businesses is that you don't have to be a big brand to be a mobile shopping success. The choice of ecommerce platforms available today means retailers don't have to build an online shop from scratch before they can sell via the internet. These same platforms also enable retailers – large and small – to instantly reach enormous numbers of bargain-hungry shoppers. As retailers gear up for the January sales, demand for mobile shopping can only grow. It's now up to businesses in the South East to ensure they get the best from this golden opportunity.

Patrick Munden, head of seller communications, eBay Europe

Testimony about grammar days

Testimony Films is making a BBC Four two-parter on the history of the grammar school in Britain and we are keen to hear from readers who went to a grammar school or taught in them.

We are looking for memories between the late 1920s and the 1970s. We're especially interested in any stories of scholarship boys and girls from humble backgrounds who really benefited from a grammar school education.

We're interested in stories of inspirational teachers who may have helped shape the lives of the children they taught.

We'd also like to hear from those who for whatever reason feel they didn't enjoy or benefit from their grammar school education. If you have a story to tell, contact Emily Sivyer on 0117 925 8589; email emily.sivyer@testimonyfilms.com; or write to Testimony Films, 12 Great George Street, Bristol, BS1 5RH.

Emily Sivyer, Testimony Films



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Review

Reviving a concept

FAIRPORT CONVENTION CELEBRATE THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF BABBACOMBE LEE



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Winter Warmer Party
Warner Bembridge Coast Hotel, Isle of Wight - Over 40s only



Friday, January 14, 2011

Our Winter Warmer Party - for over 40s only - is at Bembridge Coast, Warner's luxury hotel on the Isle of Wight. Enjoy quality accommodation, good food, live nightly entertainment and a Free Bar.

INCLUDES: Free Bar 3.30pm to 11pm Friday and 12noon to 11pm Saturday (& Sunday) - house beers, spirits & mixers, wine by the glass • 2 dinners and 2 breakfasts • Entertainment every night • En-suite Ambassador room with TV, tea/coffee tray - upgrades available • Leisure facilities: Indoor pool & sauna • Return Car Ferry

SELF-DRIVE 2 or 3 NIGHTS DRINKS-INCLUSIVE FROM £149pp Quote WB1

Bournemouth Winter Deals
at the centrally-located Suncliff & Cliffeside Hotels

Arrive: Mondays, January 3, 10, 17, 24 & 31, 2011 (4 or 7 nights) or Fridays, January 7, 14, 21 & 28, 2011 (3 or 7 nights)

Join us for a Winter Warmer break in Bournemouth where the weather is milder and the outlook brighter. Stay at the Cliffeside or Suncliff Hotel, nicely located in the East Cliff area, just a 10-minute walk to the resort's vibrant centre, award winning gardens and pier. Enjoy Half-Board accommodation and at least 2 nights' entertainment (4 nights on a 7-night stay).





PRICE INCLUDES:

- 3, 4 or 7 nights sharing a twin or double-bedded en-suite room
- Breakfast & dinner each day
- At least 2 nights' entertainment (4 nights on a 7-night stay)

SELF-DRIVE 3 NIGHTS £89pp 4 NIGHTS £115pp 7 NIGHTS £189pp Quote BC1-KOS (Cliffeside) Quote BS1-KOS (Suncliff)

Mamma Mia Party
Warner Bembridge Coast Hotel, Isle of Wight - Over 50s only



Friday, February 25, 2011

Join us for a party where the name of the game is fun. We're rekindling the 70s & 80s when Abba's songs were on everyone's lips.

PRICE INCLUDES: FREE drinks from 3.30pm to 11pm Friday, 12noon to 11pm Saturday & Sunday. Includes house beers & spirits, house wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers, tea & coffee • Dinners & Breakfasts • Mamma Mia movie screening • Abba Tribute Band • Variety entertainment • En-suite Ambassador room with TV, tea/coffee tray - upgrades available • Leisure facilities: Indoor pool & sauna • Return Car Ferry

SELF-DRIVE 3 NIGHTS DRINKS-INCLUSIVE £239pp Quote MW2-KOS

Mamma Mia Party
Warner Bodelwyddan Castle, North Wales - Over 50s only



Friday, March 25, 2011

Join us for a unique Mamma Mia Party - for over 50s only - in beautiful North Wales. Warner's Bodelwyddan Castle Hotel will resound to the sights and sounds of Abba. Enjoy free drinks and nightly entertainment including a screening of Mamma Mia the Movie and an Abba tribute act.

INCLUDES: Free Bar 6pm to 11pm daily - house beers, spirits & mixers, wine by the glass • Entertainment including a Mamma Mia the Movie screening and Abba tribute act • 3 dinners & 3 breakfasts • En-suite Ambassador room with TV, tea/coffee tray - upgrades available

SELF-DRIVE 3 NIGHTS DRINKS INCLUSIVE £299pp Quote BC3

Corinth Canal, Greek Isles & Istanbul
Escorted Rail-Cruise - afternoon departure from London



Departures: May 5, June 14, September 2 & October 2, 2011

PORTS OF CALL:
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- Daytime rail travel: London-Marseille-London
- Overnight stay in Lille or Paris outbound
- 10 night Full Board cruise on the Louis Coral
- All transfers abroad
- Full ABTA financial protection

12 DAYS FROM £1149pp Quote CG-KOS

Eastern Mediterranean
Escorted Rail-Cruise - afternoon departure from London



Departures: March 12 & November 12, 2011

PORTS OF CALL:
• Embark France - Marseilles • Malta - Valletta • Egypt - Alexandria & Port Said • Israel - Ashdod • Cyprus - Limassol • Crete - Heraklion • Italy - Naples & Genoa • Disembark in Marseilles

INCLUDED:
- Escorted throughout
- Champagne Check-in at London St Pancras
- Daytime rail travel: London-Marseille-London
- Overnight stay in Lille or Paris outbound
- 12 night Full Board cruise on the Louis Majesty
- All transfers abroad
- Full ABTA financial protection

14 DAYS FROM £1099pp Quote ME-KOS

Menton Lemon Festival & Nice Carnival
Escorted Holiday by Rail - afternoon departure from London



Departs February 20, 2011

Join us for a colourful break on the French and Italian Rivieras including visits to Menton Lemon Festival Garden of Lights and Nice Carnival Flower Parade. Enjoy Free Drinks every night at the hotel in Diano Marina and return rail travel between London and Nice in the south of France.

INCLUDED:
• Champagne check-in at London St Pancras • Escorted throughout • Afternoon departure on Eurostar to Lille • 1 night hotel B&B in Lille • TGV rail travel to Nice • 4 nights in Diano Marina at the Piccolo Hotel with 4 buffet breakfasts & 4 dinners with free wine & water PLUS Free tea/coffee daily, PLUS nightly Free bar - house wine/beers/spirits 6pm to 12midnight • 1 evening with entertainment • Included excursions • Return rail travel to London • All transfers abroad • Full ABTA financial protection

6 DAYS SEMI ALL-INCLUSIVE £699pp Quote LM2-KOS

Tuscany & Viareggio Carnival
Escorted Holiday by Rail - afternoon departure from London



Departs March 4, 2011

Come with us to Viareggio - home to Italy's most spectacular carnival with colourful floats featuring huge papier-mâché puppets. We also visit Pisa, Lucca, Florence and San Gimignano. Travel by rail each way: From London to Paris, then overnight to Florence in private cabins.

INCLUDED:
• Champagne check-in at London St. Pancras (1 glass of Champagne or 1 tea/coffee or orange juice) • Escorted throughout • Afternoon departure on Eurostar to Paris • Paris to Florence on Artesia overnight sleeper in a 2-berth cabin – outbound and return • 5 nights at the 3 star Hotel Kyrton in Forte dei Marmi • 5 breakfasts and 3 dinners • 1 Tuscan dinner with live music • Entrance to the Circuit Parade in Viareggio • Guided tour of Florence • Included excursions • Return rail travel to London • All transfers abroad • Full ABTA financial protection

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Change your home in 2011

AFTER actually buying your home, and then picking a car for the garage, generally the third most expensive thing in your life will be the furniture.

But unless you have recently scooped millions on the lottery, or had a long lost uncle leaving a fortune in the will, there is not always a massive budget to do everything at once.

It helps when there are stores like Furniture Village in the county to help out.

Its new range is stylish and comfortable with eye-catching colours and some interesting shapes to suit every room layout.

The new Mettro collection at Furniture Village has got it covered when it comes to choosing the perfect sofa, chair or corner group.

There are three models worth looking at. They are the Prado, Attica and City. They give a great taster of the range.

They all come in beautiful fabrics with strong lines and importantly a timeless appeal as it's likely they will be in the home for some time. If only we all had the money to change furnishing as often as we do our wardrobe.

The company said these designs will keep you and your home forever young.

First, let's look at the Prado Corner Group at £995. The Prado collection is bold in design, whilst maintaining a conservative element with its colour combinations. With luxuriously tactile, soft fabric the cleverly designed sofa and chairs include smooth leather for an interesting and smart contrast.

Next is the Attica 3three-seater Sofa at £799. More subtle in charcoal grey but just as on trend, is the Attica sofa. A compact and modern shape, this model would be sure to update any living area effortlessly.







IMPORTANT PIECES: Left to right, The Handmade Bed, the Attica chair and the City Large Corner Chaise all available at Furniture Village

And finally, it's the City Large Corner Chaise at £1399. The City is a fantastic contemporary design, using a wonderful array of bold colours. With the option of ordering additional sets of cushion covers, customers can decide on the exact look they are after, and this way they can also instantly update their sofa. With a large variety of colours including green, tangerine, raspberry, black and beige there is sure to be an option to suit any mood or style of room.

Pamela Taylor, upholstery buyer at Furniture Village, said: "We are looking forward to reaching a wider range of people through the Mettro collection. With statement designs and bold choices of upholstery we want to encourage people to have fun doing up their homes."

It's the same in the bedroom.

Renowned throughout the world for its superior and luxurious beds, The Handmade Bed Company is now available exclusively at Furniture Village.

Taking pride in British Craftsmanship and using only the finest natural materials, the company offers true comfort and a timeless quality. The three divan models – the 2000, 2500 and 3000 – exude luxury in every way, from the hand-tufted mattress and hand side stitching, to the sumptuous silk and wool providing a sensuous sleeping surface. The Handmade Bed 2000 is from £1,199.

The luxury mattresses have hand nested pocket springs, with beautiful combinations of wool, silk and cashmere with the addition of hand teased pashmina in the top model.

And the choices do not end there. From the size of the bed, the style of headboard and the tension of the mattress, to the colour of divan bases, the finish of feet, skirts and casters and even the drawer configuration – every decision is down to the individual, making the purchase personal and special.

Bed buyer at Furniture Village, Sue Killick, said: "This luxurious handmade bed range has been created to meet the needs of the most discerning customer. This new collection marries a sophisticated look with comfort and luxury."

For further information visit the showrooms in Gillingham, Orpington, or Tunbridge Wells, or phone 0800 7833 833.

Alternatively, have a look at www.furniture-village.co.uk.



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Keep ahead of the trends with our top tips for 2011

• Industry sources say that tourism is on the up following a year or so of stagnation. Revenue is expected to reach record levels with new popular destinations set to be topping the holiday list for backpackers and those looking for top class accommodation alike.

These include Ecuador, Chile – particularly the island of Tierra del Fuego, The Ivory Coast, Taiwan and the Andaman Islands.

• Social shopping is big news in the USA and soon will be here. Gone are the days of private online shopping. Collective buying sites such as Groupon and LivingSocial are the next big thing.

• The home improvement sector is one way of keeping your four walls fresh while not having to move. With the housing industry market continuing to look stagnant, a new conservatory or an extension could be just as good as moving.

• Websites such as UrbanDaddy and Thrillist are attracting increasing numbers of men keen to stay at the forefront of innovation.

• Sustainable profitability is a watchword for companies looking to rake in the cash but retain green credentials.

Those businesses that can show they are helping to save the planet will increasingly get the nod, especially when it comes to younger customers.

• Physical fitness is still big businesses and gym membership is likely to keep increasing. But a coming trend is for home exercise. A few weights and an exercise bike mean no need to fork out huge amounts of cash for memberships. It can be a social activity too – why not invite some friends over?

• Global warming means good news for hat makers. To fight off the cold and screen out the sun's extremes in temperature mean head coverings are becoming a new must have – and stylish designs are set to hit the market.

• Slow fooding is one way to enjoy company and a good meal. More and more restaurants are giving diners a hot plate and some uncooked meat so they can prepare their meals themselves.

Cooking your own feast in a restaurant gives plenty of time for conversation, good wine and company with expert staff on hand to tell you how to do it.

• Volunteering rather than giving is the way forward for many charities. Rather than just asking for cash, more and more are asking for time and expertise. Whether its running sports sessions for disadvantaged youths or helping serve meals to pensioners, people's skills are valuable in assisting others without cash changing hands. And those who take the trouble to help have new found experiences.

• The Baby Boomers of the 60s are coming into their later years and there are a lot of them.

So there are a lot that can be done for them as well, business ideas include more older-person friendly homes, supermarkets with lower shelves and wheelchair accessible retail and sports facilities.

Experts are also predicting a growth in opportunities for those providing private healthcare and hobbies such as yoga, meditation and the creative arts.

Get a new you for the New Year

AS the clock struck 12 on New Year's Eve, people across Kent, were making a mental list of New Year resolutions.

From faddy diets and gym programmes to beauty routines and health kicks – they are important.

Despite the good intentions, the sad reality is that a massive 60 per cent will have given up on their resolutions just two weeks into the New Year.

However, doing something about your appearance doesn't have to be taxing.

The Transform Cosmetic Surgery Clinic in Maidstone, offers a range of non-surgical treatments to refresh the skin and reveal a new, younger looking you for the New Year.

If you're looking for a treatment that will leave your skin hair-free and silky smooth in the New Year you should opt for laser hair removal.

Winter is the perfect time to start a course of laser hair removal, ensuring you will have beautiful fuzz-free skin as soon as the sun starts shining.

Prices start from £166 per treatment based on the winter offer for a minimum of three treatments.

Dermal fillers are a great way of increasing the volume in lips, creating a beautifully defined, more kissable set of lips all year round, not just under the mistletoe.

Transform use Juvederm ULTRA SMILE, a unique gentle formulation filler that's designed for immediate but lasting results. Treatments are from £300 within the winter offers.

Rejuvenate your skin and restore that fresh and youthful glow with Transform's range of facial peels.

Helping to improve skin tone and texture, peels can aid in the reduction of visible wrinkles, promote collagen production in the skin – resulting in a brighter, clearer complexion –

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Transform Cosmetic Surgery Clinic in Maidstone can help you revitalise your appearance





FACE 2011: Get more youthful skin with Microdermabrasion, above, or a massage, right

and can treat acne and acne scarring.

Facial peels are an accelerated form of exfoliation and there are a range of different formulations, depending on your particular skin type – all of which result in a younger, more radiant you.

Another treatment which can offer a quick skin 'pick-me-up' through deep exfoliation is Microdermabrasion. The non-invasive treatment creates smoother, more radiant skin and promotes the growth of new skin cells.

Treatments for Microdermabrasion are from £55 per treatment with best results after a course of six. Facial peels are available from £90 per treatment.

Transform Cosmetic Surgery Clinic Maidstone is based at 3&4 Tolherst Court, Turkey Mill, Ashford Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 5SF.

For more information or to book an appointment, phone 0500 59 59 59 or visit www.transforminglives.co.uk.



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Official Government Environment Data. Fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO2 emissions (g/km). Spark 1.0 5dr: Urban 42.8 (6.6), Extra Urban 67.3 (4.2), Combined 55.4 (5.1), CO2 Emissions 119 g/km.

0315

What's not to like?

MOST people want to be liked and it really doesn't take that much to be a popular guy or girl. Here are a some ideas on how to up your likeability quotient in 2011.

Be willing to step out of your comfort zone. If you are not popular, maybe it is because you are not comfortable doing the things that popular people tend to do – joking, chatting and in general, engaging people. Just have fun a bit more.

Popular people are on friendly terms with pretty much everyone – not only their peers, but teachers, parents, kids, and generally anyone who's even remotely pleasant.

Empathy

Of all the people skills popular individuals have, the one none of them can do without is empathy. How well do you relate to other people? If you are so caught up in how they perceive you that you don't consider how they feel, then you're being self-absorbed – not in that cocky, obnoxious sort of way, but still, your thoughts are revolving around you. Stop being concerned so much about how you look, how you sound, how you compare, and start thinking about how other people are doing.

Popular people don't just know everyone – they're on good terms with everyone. They establish those terms by helping people out, and they don't do it in particularly noticeable ways. They do little things to establish rapport.

Don't force your opinions on people. If someone is going on about something you disagree with phrase your objections in a way not to make you appear arrogant.

Be yourself – you might think that in order to be popular, you need to be attractive and talented, but while it's true that those qualities are more likely to make you a hit with people – there are extremely popular people who are otherwise quite average, and there are extremely good-looking and talented people who are anything but popular.

Surprisingly, many 'popular' people don't put too much conscious effort into it. They simply are themselves. If you're desperate to be popular, it will show in your actions, and people will think you're a poser.

Be generous – make sure you buy your round in the pub, but don't flash the cash. Being loaded is certainly not the way to becoming truly popular.

Being popular is being dressed like you mean it. Some popular people wear those expensive, rare clothes but it's easier to dress like yourself. Most people don't like people who wear flashy clothes, but they also don't like people who look like they've just finished rolling in a muddy field.

Everyone has some flaws. Don't let that stop you! Even if you feel that you just aren't good, keep believing. Love yourself and believe in yourself. Don't sit in the corner. Get up, and get into the spotlight.

Drive costs down

New Year, new car? Don't let rise in VAT put you off

MOTOR dealers are promising the rise in VAT this month won't affect car prices as much as many drivers might expect.

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, or SMMT as its known, forecasts new car sales in 2010 went up by two per cent on the previous year. That is over two million unit sales.

The VAT increase on Tuesday is expected to have some influence on the year-end upsurge, with motorists looking to avoid the January VAT rise and grab themselves a bargain before the rise from 17.5 per cent to 20 per cent.

Since 2000, trends in new car sales have demonstrated that figures in January have been double those in February, but with an increase of VAT looming, SMMT is providing members with advice on vehicle sales in 2011.

SMMT said customers who had paid for a new car before January 3 this year and receive it on or after January 4, will pay 17.5 per cent on the purchase.

Customers who paid a deposit for their car, received on or before January 3, will be subject to VAT at 17.5 per cent and the balance, when received on or after January 4, will be subject to VAT at 20 per cent. Customers who buy a vehicle on, or after January 4, must pay 20 per cent VAT.

So it really was all down to good timing. If you missed the deadline, there is little to worry about. Many dealers say they are determined to help customers swallow the worst of the rise, which should have little effect on the actual price paid. To start with at least.



SEARCH AROUND: The rise in VAT doesn't mean you still can't find a bargain

Dealers really don't have that much movement in the price actually paid for the car itself, but there is usually such a myriad of extras that prices across the board can be, shall we say, adjusted to help buyers. So the recommendation is, don't be put off by the screen price.

Ray Morris runs two showrooms specialising in selling nearly new automatic cars – one in Welling and the other in Bexleyheath.

He said: "With the VAT going on new cars, our stock will look even more competitive. We will be great value for money because the new cars will get more expensive and our will be even cheaper.

"And with summer around the corner we are looking forward to the New Year with some glee."

He added: "Due to our continued success and expansion, we have more than 225 automatic cars. You can take advantage of the recent financial uncertainty with our amazingly priced cars, which are now much less than new prices, all of which are actually in stock and available.

"We specialise in all the very best small automatic/medium automatic/large size automatic one owner genuine mileage automatic cars with prices from £3,000 to £25,000 and mileages from as little as a 100."

SMMT said the new registration will also be out soon.

The two-digit year code changes twice a year for all new cars sold; once in March and then again in September. In 2011, the plate changes will be '11' in March and '61' in September.

For more information on Ray Morris, visit www.automaticcarsltd.co.uk.

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Cut it in a new career

IT'S a New Year, so that means a new beginning and perhaps a new career.

Why go out and get your hair done when you could start a course and learn how to do it yourself, and make some extra cash along the way?

Students can choose their own hours and charge reasonable prices once qualified. And they will build up a client list as long as their arm in no time.

So what's not to like about being a hairdresser in the 21st Century?

For women thinking of a new career, often after having children, training for hairdressing is a very attractive proposition.

Demand

With hairdressing coming top of the happiness league in nearly every survey on job satisfaction, and expert training available in nearly every town, it is no wonder colleges like K College find their courses in big demand at every level every year.

For Emma Summers, 24, from Tunbridge Wells, January last year was a turning point. She had a little boy when she was 17 and her daughter three years later and loved being a full-time mum. She had left school with good GCSEs.

She said: "Office work was only thing I could do without qualifications. I do like office work but find it incredibly easy and didn't feel it was challenging me enough and wanted to do something practical. So I decided to think what I really wanted to do instead of what was easy.

"I'm quite practical. I thought, 'People will always want to have their hair cut, won't they?'



FLEXIBILITY: Retraining as a hairdresser is a popular career move among mothers who want a change of career, but also want to work the hours that fit in with their busy lives

"When you're a child you play with your dollies' hair and then as you get older, you play with your friends' hair. It's just something that caught my attention and that I could do.

"College was amazing and I really enjoyed it. I didn't go in thinking eughhh, spreadsheets today. There is nothing about it I don't like."

Emma decided at the beginning of 2010 what she wanted to do and added: "I went for it. Everybody starts the New Year with new intentions. By February I had registered and by September I was enrolled."

Emma is now doing the NVQ 2 course in women's hairdressing at K College's Tonbridge campus in Brook Street. She is also exploring job options, and has this to say to anyone who is thinking of making changes.

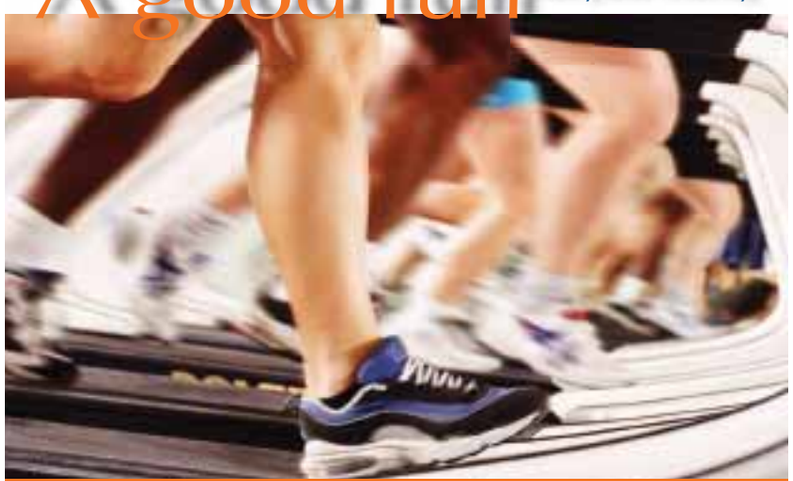
She said: "When you have childcare that you're happy with, going to college is fantastic and I advise anyone to do the same as I did. Being a young mum, I missed out on the chance to go to college, but I'm doing it now and it's given me lot of opportunities."



Advisors on courses in hairdressing, or any other vocational or higher education courses, are available in all the towns served by K College – Tonbridge, Ashford, Folkestone and Dover.

For more information visit www.kcollege.ac.uk.

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Keys to making the right move

A FRESH START
A new home is bright, clean, untouched by previous owners and their dodgy DIY. It provides a blank canvas on which to stamp your own style and personality from day one.

THE PRICE IS RIGHT
Most house builders price their homes to sell swiftly, particularly in these competitive times. So keen prices, generous incentives and help with moving costs provide unbeatable value for money.

GREENER AND CHEAPER
Today's new homes are built to the latest environmental standards, so they are not only better for the planet, but cheaper to run. They are much more energy-efficient and generate 60 per cent less carbon dioxide emissions than older homes. This can reduce utility bills by more than £500 a year.

LESS CHAIN, LESS HASSLE
You can move into a new home as soon as it is complete. There's no need to wait for existing owners to move out. This reduces the house-buying chain and the stress and uncertainty that is often associated with moving, particularly into a second-hand home.

MORE FOR YOUR MONEY
New homes are built to a much higher specification than the majority of older homes, so you get more for your money. They have central heating, double-glazing and high standards of roof, floor and wall insulation all included in the price.

Standard features also usually include fitted kitchens with integrated appliances and stylish bathrooms and cloakrooms, many en suite.

PEACE OF MIND
The quality of house building construction and service has grown significantly in recent years with almost 90 per cent of home buyers declaring themselves satisfied with their new homes in the most recent industry survey.

Many house builders also provide a comprehensive customer care service, and added peace of mind is provided by the 10-year warranty issued by organisations such as the National House Building Council.

SPOILT FOR CHOICE
New homes offer something for everyone. There are countless designs and styles to choose from in all price ranges. Many builders offer a bespoke service to choose decorations, fixtures and fittings or extra items at an additional cost. This can include flooring, interior design or even a garden landscape service.

And fully-furnished show homes and sales complexes, staffed by helpful sales advisers and often open seven days a week, can make it much easier to choose the home of your dreams.

A WISE INVESTMENT
Owning a new home could well be one of the best investments you could ever make and provide a comforting nest egg for the future.

But it's important not to overstretch your finances or speculate on short-term price rises. Of course, house prices can go up or down, but it's easy to see why so many people feel that buying a new home, particularly with all the help that builders can provide, was their best move ever.



Part exchange for a fast move

SELLING a property is commonly agreed to be one of the most stressful and time-consuming tasks most people are likely to undertake – and trying to coincide buying a new home with selling your existing property can be tricky.

Neil and Joanne Kenny, seen here with their daughter Lauren, chose to sell their previous home to their house builder under its Part Exchange Plus scheme, as they were after a quick and easy move, and that's exactly what they got.

Neil said: "When we began looking for a property all we wanted was a fast, hassle free move.

"We'd seen the house we wanted when we looked round for the first time, and we loved the size and the look of it.

"Once we'd made the decision to move, everything went extremely smoothly from then on. The house builder bought our house, leaving us free to concentrate on our new home, and it was certainly faster than if we had sold our old property ourselves.

"Most importantly, it was totally stress-free, which was just what we had wanted."

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Time to be on the move

THE New Year is set to be a good one in Kent's property market if the current trend of rising demand continues.

That's according to the National Association of Estate Agents who said demand from buyers increased in November and could well continue, or even rise further.

And sellers are joining in too. The association's monthly housing market report found that the average estate agent branch had 241 house hunters registered in November. In October the figure was 218.

The report also found sales levels remained constant for the fourth month in a row, with the average branch selling seven properties. This was particularly positive as the market was entering its annual seasonal slowdown, when activity traditionally slows.

The National Association of Estate Agents reveals why it is optimistic for house sales over the coming year

More first timers are needed though in Kent. The percentage of sales being made to first time buyers also fell – from 23 per cent in October to 19 per cent in November.

Michael Jones, president of the NAEA said: "There is still clear evidence of demand for property in Kent. In fact, given the restrictions on mortgage lending and the approach of Christmas, the true level of demand is probably higher than indicated by our figures.

"These are not window-shoppers. Our agents are continuing to make sales and it is particularly pleasing to see sales figures remain constant at this time of the year."

And he is confident of a good new year. Mr Jones said: "We would like to see more people bring their properties to market. Some sellers in our experience continue to have unrealistic expectations over the value of their property. These potential sellers are likely to be holding back in the hope of price rises during 2011.

"We believe that prices are likely to remain reasonably stable for the next 12 months, dependant on interest rates remaining low of course, and so we hope that this isn't misplaced optimism."

Plus buying a new home in the New Year should be easier.

Many developers are coming up with schemes to tempt buyers, and it appears the banks may even join in the fun.

Taylor Wimpey said it is determined to help homebuyers make their move in 2011.

Top tips to getting a bigger home

1. It's a buyer's market, so be realistic about the asking price. Stop thinking about what your home was worth at the peak of the market. What is it worth now? Price declines in buyer's market now make more desirable homes affordable.

2. Make sure you speak with a mortgage specialist so that you know prices for your next home. Make sure you are comfortable with your new mortgage payments.

3. Mortgage rates are at all-time lows. You want to lock in at these low rates, so your rates will stay affordable.

4. Don't get caught up in the emotion when you are buying a home. If you fall in love with a house that could be your next home, you will not negotiate a price with a clear head.

5. A buyer's market means a larger selection of homes. This gives the buyer more leverage, since the inventory is high. Make sure you take advantage of this when you are buying your next home.

6. The current favorable market conditions won't last long.

7. Upgrading your home allows you to gain more features in your next home. It also may allow you to move into a more desirable area.



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* Maximum discount for an early exchange. Part exchange subject to certain criteria. Photograph at Kings Hill is of a similar property on an existing Hillreed development. Prices and availability correct at time of going to press.

Coming soon at Higham and Wigmore

HILLREED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS

The housebuilder said it'll do all the company to assist would-be movers in Kent to secure their ideal home this New Year with a range of fantastic incentives to suit first-time buyers and those with a property to sell.

There is the popular Deposit Match scheme, for example, which lets qualifying purchasers double their deposits on selected Taylor Wimpey properties at developments across the county.

The housebuilder will then match purchaser's down-payments up to 10 per cent of the property price in the form of an interest-free, 10-year loan, saving them months or even years of saving and opening up a wider range of attractive mortgage deals.

For existing homeowners, Taylor Wimpey's easymover initiative sees the housebuilder find a buyer for a current property in just a few weeks – and even cover the cost of estate agents' fees and removals.

Part Exchange offers qualifying customers the market value of their existing property, based on the average of independent professional valuations, off the price of their brand new Taylor Wimpey home.

Incentives are available on selected plots only and are subject to availability, terms and conditions. Full details can be obtained from the sales executive at any of the 14 sites in Kent, the company is developing. These include Millers Court in Canterbury, Mistletoe Court in Gillingham and Meadow View, Herne Bay.

Further information on Taylor Wimpey homebuyer incentives and new homes developments across Kent is available by visiting www.taylorwimpey.co.uk.

Meanwhile, Antler Homes is offering to pay the stamp duty, worth up to £12,750, based on homes priced at £425,000, at Bredhurst Gardens in Wigmore, Gillingham. It also has several four-bedroom houses remaining for sale from £399,950. Get further information by phoning RPC Land and New Homes, the selling agents, on 01634 835900. View by appointment only.

The company will also pay the stamp duty worth up to £1,849.50 based on the two-bedroom coach house priced at £184,950 at Bishop's Field in Maidstone.

It has a trio of two-bedroom apartments and a single two-bedroom coach house from £149,950.

The number here is 01622 600110 for the show apartment which is open Friday to Sunday, 10am to 5pm.

Fairview New Homes is offering up to a 20 per cent deposit top up when first-time buyers put down a five per cent deposit at developments in Royal Tunbridge Wells, Greenhithe, South Darenth, High Wycombe, Crawley and Ashford, Kent.

This incentive has been introduced at a key time, as recent research from YouGov shows 80 per cent of people think the biggest problem in UK housing market is the lack of affordability for first-time buyers, or high levels of debt required to buy a property.

The 20 per cent deposit loan is free for up to 10 years, and is only available on selected new apartments.

Jim Holliday, sales director of Fairview, said: "With the estimated average age for first-time buyers now at 38, it is apparent that young people need all the help they can get to make that vital first step onto the property ladder.

"At Fairview, we do what we can to get people living in their own home. The Flying Start incentive is a remarkable benefit as it provides exactly the kind of assistance that first-time buyers need in such a challenging economic environment."

Fairview developments include the new Evolution in Ashford, where two-bedroom apartments are from £104,995 and four-bedroom houses from £199,995.

For more information on any Fairview New Homes developments or incentives, visit www.fairview.co.uk, or call 0800 731 4477.



INCENTIVES: Antler Homes is offering to pay stamp duty on some of its properties, like Bishop's Field in Maidstone, left, and Bredhurst Gardens in Wigmore, Gillingham, above

It's an ideal time to buy

THE Kent spokesman for the National Association of Estate Agents, John Oakley said many will be asking 'to buy or not to buy, that is the question'.

He said: "When Christmas and New Year celebrations are over many people's thoughts turn to moving home.

"The question is, is now a good time to be looking for that new home?

"I suggest that for many this is an ideal time to be buying. House prices are lower than they have been for a good few years and are likely to remain stable during the forthcoming months.

"Mortgage rates are at an all-time low and the Bank of England in December held the base rate at 0.5 per cent for the 21st month in a row.

"Whilst I accept mortgages are difficult to obtain at the moment, if you can get yourself in a position to obtain one then you can lock into low rates, Because of the slow market you may well be able to negotiate a good purchase price, and in the medium to long term, house prices will have to recover due to the basic economics of supply and demand.

"There is a shortage of available property and new homes developers have not been building in any significant numbers for the last two years.

"There is a pent-up demand for housing in this country and as soon as the lenders start to be a little more forthcoming with funds the demand will outstrip supply and inevitably there will be an upward pressure on prices once again.

"In the circumstances therefore I would suggest this will a good time to get a move on.

"People should call on their local estate agent. Listen to what they have to say, they really are the experts in all matters relating to buying and selling and I hope that by this time next year you will be happily settled in a new home."

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A folk-rock convention

Review

BY **NICK AMES**

ONE of the country's most enduring and respected bands will take to the stage in February, playing their distinctly English brand of folk-rock.

Fairport Convention visit the Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells, on Wednesday, February 16, as part of the group's annual winter tour.

Fairport's concert will not only include songs from the new studio album Festival Bell but will also feature a performance of Babbacombe Lee, the band's classic 1971 folkrock "concept album".

Released to coincide with the tour, Festival Bell is the first new Fairport Convention album for four years.

The Assembly Hall concert will feature a selection from the album's 14 tracks – which include compositions by members of the band, two songs by the legendary Ralph McTell and a reworking of the Sandy Denny classic Rising For The Moon.

The concert will open with a set from young duo Katriona Gilmore and Jamie Roberts.

Fairport will then take the stage to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Babbacombe Lee by performing the critically acclaimed folkrock opera in its entirety. The work tells the fascinating story of John "Babbacombe" Lee, a Victorian criminal who was reprieved after three attempts to hang him failed.

"We've played in Tunbridge Wells before but we always enjoy coming back here," said lead vocalist and guitarist Simon Nicol.

"In fact, the Assembly Hall is one of our favourite venues and we particularly look forward to playing there again on a Wednesday evening. This year the concert will be rather different – not only have we got a whole album's worth of new material to choose from but this will be the first time we've played the whole of Babbacombe Lee since the 70s.

Story

"The songs all work individually and several had already snuck their way back into our repertoire. But as a song cycle it tells a story which gives a real sense of purpose to the set.

"The 'man they couldn't hang' is part of urban mythology and even people who have not got a clear idea of who he is know something of the story – a quirky part of English law."

The album follows Lee's life story described in song, from his boyhood through his conviction for murder, sentence of death, and the failure to carry out the sentence.

The album describes how Lee went to work in the service of a Miss Keyes. While Lee was in her service, she was murdered, and he was accused, tried and convicted of the crime, and sentenced to death. However, when authorities attempted to hang him, the gallows failed three times, resulting in his release.

Fairport's Dave Swarbrick said he thought of the song cycle after discovering a file of old newspaper clippings in an antique shop which contained John Lee's own copies of the newspaper articles and was bound by him, signed and dated January 30, 1908.

Simon said: "We will also be playing songs from our new album and some of the older numbers. People want to hear things like Meet on the Ledge so to accommodate our older material we will vary the new ones each night."

As a teenager, Simon met local musician Ashley Hutchings. The pair – with others – formed Fairport Convention, taking the name from Simon's house "Fairport" where the band rehearsed.

Fairport Convention became hugely successful after vocalist Sandy Denny joined the band. However, after Sandy left Simon took a more prominent role on stage. He also became more involved in studio work and production.

During the 70s, Simon took a four-year break from Fairport, working on various projects as both producer and musician, collaborating with Dave Swarbrick and The Albion Country Band among others.

Simon rejoined Fairport Convention in 1975 and has been the band's main guitarist and lead singer ever since. However, he has continued to work with other musicians including Dave Swarbrick and Ashley Hutchings and has toured with, among others, Beverley Craven and Art Garfunkel.

"This line-up has been together for 12 years, the longest of any in Fairport's history," said Simon. "I was still at school when I started out – now I've got my bus pass. Hopefully I am much better at what I do now, just as if I was a brain surgeon or a carpenter.

"I do approach things in a different way, but as you get older I suppose you do lack that full-on energy of youth."

Folk rock is currently in fashion with bands such as Mumford and Sons and America's Fleet Foxes – Simon is a fan of both groups. He said he would love to see some of the new artists on stage at the group's annual Cropedy (Oxfordshire) Festival which it plays every year.

"It was a village in Oxfordshire where a couple of band members lived and we'd rehearse in the village hall," said Simon.

"One year in the mid 70s we were asked to play a set after the village fete, which was a huge success.

"It grew into an annual event – now, 35 years on, it has a license for 20,000 people. Really it's my pride and joy and I walk around like a dog with two tails.

"When people see us they see music being created before their eyes – there is no veil of technology between us and the audience."

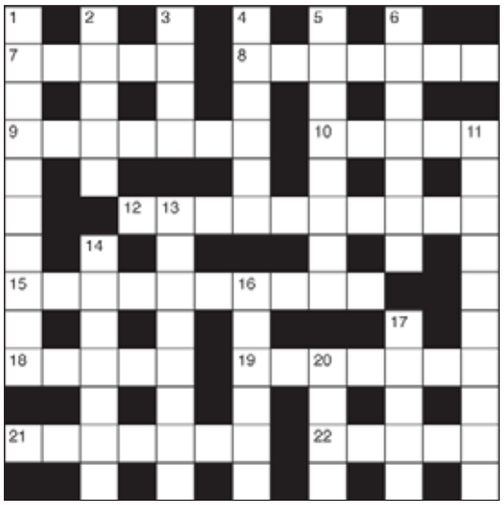
• Fairport Convention's concert at the Assembly Hall starts at 7.30pm. Tickets and booking information are available from the box office on 01892 530613 or at www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk.



ENTERTAINERS: Simon Nicol, top left, is looking forward to Fairport Convention's Kent gig

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Waterstone's in Tunbridge Wells will present a £10 book token for the correct entry of the cryptic crossword picked at random. Send your completed grids to KoS, Prize Crossword, Apple Barn, Smeeth, Ashford, TN25 6SS. Closing date is Wednesday, January 5, 2010



CROSSWORD No 420

Name.....

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CRYPTIC CLUES

Across

7. Dared to trouble a snake (5)
8. Edward got the hump when hit (7)
9. Rational record of one going to California (7)
10. Big regal characters ordered out (5)
12. Beatles get disturbed by an insect (4,6)
15. It's not on the nose (4-3,3)
18. Tie rusts badly (5)
19. Getting awfully glum about a row over bait (7)
21. Harbour an officer in the porch (7)
22. River, of China perhaps (5)

Down

1. Walter's let out of the financial centre (4,6)
2. Saying from the commercial era (5)
3. The queen is in charge of the man (4)
4. Street celebration on return from prison camp (6)
5. Somehow buy and sell to east for 50 (5-3)
6. Drinks to ghosts (7)
11. Two are more unfeeling (4,6)
13. Twins hop wildly here (8)
14. Get some paper on account (7)
16. Not a bold colour (6)
17. Man on foreign office raid (5)
20. Stare at a new page (4)

SCRIBBLE HERE

QUICK CLUES

Across

7. Surmise (5)
8. Ancient ruler (7)
9. Watch (7)
10. Swift (5)
12. Course of study (10)
15. Gasping (10)
18. Jostle (5)
19. Attentive (7)
21. Merit (7)
22. Category (5)

Down

1. Upright (10)
2. Romany (5)
3. Expensive (4)
4. Seem (6)
5. Army quarters (8)
6. Young frog (7)
11. Dishearten (10)
13. Unfavourable (8)
14. Wordy (7)
16. Supple (6)
17. Refuse (5)
20. Dainty (4)

CRYPTIC SOLUTIONS 419: Across: 1 Overspend; 8 Ill; 9 Definitions; 11 Contact; 12 Adult; 13 Ratify; 15 Dampen; 17 Leeds; 18 Octopod; 20 Ace of hearts; 22 Nod; 23 Spectator. Down: 2 Vie; 3 Sonia; 4 Estate; 5 Diorama; 6 Tissue paper; 7 Glistened; 10 Find the lady; 11 Carolling; 14 Fastens; 16 Toffee; 19 Theft; 21 Two. **QUICK SOLUTIONS 420:** Across: 7 Opine; 8 Pharaoh; 9 Observe; 10 Rapid; 12 Curriculum; 15 Breathless; 18 Elbow; 19 Mindful; 21 Deserve; 22 Class. Down: 1 Honourable; 2 Gipsy; 3 Dear; 4 Appear; 5 Barracks; 6 Tadpole; 11 Demoralise; 13 Untoward; 14 Verbose; 16 Limber; 17 Offal; 20 Nice.

• The winner of no 418 is J Ashby, Molash. The winner of last week's crossword (no 419) will be announced next week.

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RESTAURANT REVIEW

BY **CLIFFORD LARKIN-SMITH**



ON A very cold Saturday evening we set out across East Kent's snow-covered roads in search of a hot and spicy meal and hoping to escape, at least psychologically, from frozen Britain.

We found the answer at The Bangkok, an established, small and simple, yet charming restaurant located just off the main Northdown Road in Cliftonville, near Margate.

The Bangkok has been at Prices Avenue for five years and in the area overall for 17 years now.

They do not have a website although you can find their contact details and several positive reviews online.

Husband and wife team Malcolm and Mai share the cooking and serving and have established a loyal following with residents and visitors to the area. They enjoy a close relationship with many hotels and guesthouses in the area too.

Traditional Thai pictures and paintings feature on the oak beamed walls and ceiling of this cosy and unpretentious venue – there is a capacity of less than 30 covers.

Open from Wednesday to Saturday the restaurant is unlicensed and operates a "bring your own" policy.

We began with sai krok isaan, homemade sausages of pork, garlic and chilli served with a salad garnish at £5.20 and tod man pla, Thai style spicy fish cakes deep fried, mixed with green beans and curry paste at £5.

These were accompanied by a bowl of plain and spicy crackers and a fiercely spicy sweet chilli dip.

Both dishes were beautifully prepared and a feisty encounter. Our bottle of chilled rose was a welcome accompaniment.

There is a specials board and I was tempted by the whole sea bass tamarind lemon grass sauce at £12.90. There is plenty to choose from on the menu and seafood lovers like myself are well catered for.

However, on this occasion we chose col-neua put prik at £7, stir fried beef with chillis and green peppers, and gwadtiaow rad na at £6.50, noodles and vegetables fried with chicken and pork in soy sauce with a chicken stock gravy.

Mai and Malcolm insisted that we also try a wonderful lamb and mango curry. Malcolm pointed out with some amusement that this is not truly a Thai dish as there is no lamb in Thailand. However, this is a meal they have perfected and it has become a best seller.

We had no room for dessert but were served with some fresh-sliced strawberry, kiwi fruit and pineapple which actually rounded off our meal perfectly.

The total bill came to £26.20.

If you are seeking a taste of Thailand and a warm welcome, the Bangkok Thai Restaurant could be just the place to spice up your life.

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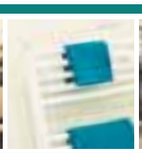
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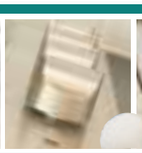
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Advertisers Announcement

6 Wins For Higgins Homes at International Property Awards UK

Privately owned Essex house builder, Higgins Homes, has been awarded six separate awards at the International Property Awards, held at the Lancaster Hotel, London, on November 27, including the enviable Best Apartment UK award.

The awards, sponsored by Bloomberg Television and Google, cover both the residential and commercial property industries and recognise the highest achieving property companies in the UK. The judging panel of property experts from around the globe included Luke McKend of Google UK and Peter Bolton King, CEO of the National Federation of Property Professionals.

Higgins took home awards for Best Apartment in Hertfordshire for its ICE development, Best Apartment in Kent for The Old Hospital, Best Apartment in London for Prime at Hither Green, Best Development Marketing Campaign for The Old Hospital in Kent and the Best Developer Website UK.



The Old Hospital apartment complex in Kent also earned Higgins Homes the coveted title of Best Apartment UK. This award also saw Higgins Homes compete for the ultimate title of Best Apartment (World), against winners from other regions around the world, including the Asia/Pacific, the Americas, Europe and Africa.

Sales and marketing suites and show apartments are open at most developments from 10am to 5pm (closed Tuesday and Wednesday) but full details of opening times can be found at: www.higginshomes.co.uk



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Maidstone Branch

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Snodland — £375



- Studio flat with appliances
- Modern bathroom
- Situated in High Street
- Would suit single person

Kingfisher Meadow — £600



- One bedroom apartment 3rd floor
- Allocated parking in secure site
- dressing area in bedroom
- kitchen with integrated appliances

Dover Street — £625



- 2 bedroom house in popular street
- On road parking
- Rear garden
- Large Cellar bathroom

Bearsted — £650



- 2 bedroom flat on The Green
- 2nd rm can be used for dressing rm
- Two reception rooms
- Off road parking for one car

Sandling Road — £675



- 2 bedroom house with character
- Open fire place - usable
- Kitchen down stairs in cellar - modern
- Rear garden and lean to

Fant Lane — £650



- 2 bedroom terrace house
- Spacious ground floor area
- 2 reception room and large kitchen
- Rear garden and shed

Scotney Gardens — £695



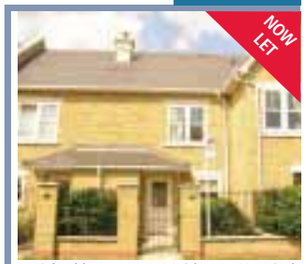
- 3rd floor apartment in good location
- 2 bedrooms FURNISHED
- Living room with laminated flooring
- Kitchen with appliances

Holborough — £795



- Modern new apartment
- 2 good sized bedrooms on top floor
- 2 bathrooms
- Balcony and open plan living and

Marigold Way — £725



- 2 bed house near Maidstone Hospital
- Master with ensuite bedroom
- Kitchen with appliances
- Rear garden and 2 parking spaces

Queensgate — £750



- Two bedroom 2nd floor apartment
- Finished to a high standard
- Master with wardrobes and ensuite
- Further bathroom, parking

Larkfield — £795



- 3 bedroom terrace house
- Modern fitted kitchen
- Living and dining room area
- Upstairs modern bathroom

Leybourne — £800



- 3 bedroom end of terrace house
- 2 reception rooms
- Kitchen with oven and hob
- Rear garden and garage

Palmer Road — £950



- 4 bedroom house in popular location
- Long rear garden and garage
- Dining room, living room and study
- Bathroom and Shower

Hollingbourne — £1300



- Detached property on private road
- Front and rear gardens
- Modern fitted kitchen
- Living room, four bedrooms

Langley — £1300



- Five bedroom detached family house
- Recently refurbished,
- Under floor heating in kitchen,
- Large kitchen diner

Loose Road — £1500



- 4/5 bed Edwardian semi dtchd house
- Three reception rooms
- Modern kitchen with appliances
- En suite shower rm, family bathroom

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CHATHAM £550



REDUCED- A recently renovated two bedroom house situated close to Chatham town centre and mainline Railway station. The property comprises of two double bedrooms, family bathroom, lounge, dinner and fitted kitchen as well as impressive garden. Available to view now!

CHATHAM £575



A must see modern two bedroom flat in a popular area of Chatham close to mainline rail station and local amenities. Comprises of two bedrooms, open plan lounge/kitchen area as well as family bathroom. HOUSING BENEFIT CONSIDERED WITH GUARANTOR.

GILLINGHAM £550



This delightful one bedroom ground floor flat is ideally located within walking distance of the town centre and mainline railway station. The property has many attractions included modern fitted kitchen to an off road parking space which makes this a must see property. Don't miss out!

STROOD £610



2 bedroom unfurnished terrace house, good sized lounge, two double bedrooms, good size bathroom and fitted kitchen. Added benefits included carpets through-out upstairs, laminated lounge and good sized back garden. Available to view now.

CHATHAM £595



2 bedroom terraced house situated in Chatham comprises of 1 double and 1 good sized single bedroom, lounge and separate dinning room with laminated flooring, fitted kitchen, upstairs bathroom and rear garden. This property also has the added benefit of double glazing and gas central heating.

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GILLINGHAM £650



Two bedroom terraced house which has recently been modernised. Early viewing for this property is essential as it has lots of added benefits including modern bathroom with built in shower cubical, large fitted kitchen and good sized garden to name a few.

STROOD £550



A two bedroom mid terraced house, unfurnished, close to town centre and local schools. Lounge, separate dining room, kitchen and bathroom and two double bedrooms. The property benefits from gas central heating and rear garden. Ideal for mature or retired tenants.

GILLINGHAM £475



This excellent price one bedroom ground floor unfurnished self contained flat has the benefits of full gas central heating, good decorative order, fitted kitchen, lounge, double bedroom, basement, and small rear garden. Book a viewing now.

CHATHAM £474



REDUCED- A newly built second floor one bedroom flat close to local amenities. 1 double bedroom, kitchen/lounge which includes an electric oven and a gas hob and white bathroom suite. Allocated parking for one car per flat. HOUSING BENEFIT CONSIDERED WITH GUARANTOR. NO PETS. NO SMOKERS

GILLINGHAM £590



A spacious two bedroom terraced house ideally located with a short distance of town centre, train station and local schools. Comprises of lounge, dinning room, two double bedrooms, family bathroom fitted kitchen and downstairs shower room with wc. Added benefits include GCH, DG and rear garden.

GILLINGHAM £575



Two bed terraced house close to local amenities. Unfurnished, two reception rooms downstairs, fitted kitchen with a cooker and space for other appliances and a bathroom Upstairs are two bedrooms. Other benefits include gas central heating, double glazing, an enclosed rear garden.

GILLINGHAM £795



This must see property is located in the popular area of upper Gillingham. It comprises of 2 good sized double bedrooms, one single bedroom, large lounge, shower room and fitted kitchen. Other benefits include conservatory leading to the garden. Don't miss out book a viewing today.

GILLINGHAM £450



1 Bedroom ground floor flat located in Poet's corner in Upper Gillingham. Unfurnished and comprises of entrance hallway, lounge, dining room, kitchen, double bedroom and bathroom, gas fired central heating and garden. HOUSING BENEFIT ACCEPTED WITH GUARANTOR.

GILLINGHAM £595



Well designed ground floor luxury one bedroom flat. Modern fitted Kitchen with white units including an Electric Oven, Hob and ceramic tiled flooring. Modern tiled bathroom with a white suite and heated towel rail and off street parking for one car which makes this a desirable property.

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Women Seeking

OUTGOING blonde, 29, big blue eyes, great personality, fun to be with, WLTM intelligent mature male for a loving relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 353661**

VERY attractive happy go lucky female, 37, long dark hair, lovely smile, seeks cool exciting guy to enjoy life to the full with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 353659**

DISCO queen, fun loving, black, attractive serene female, 37, slim, adores music, theatre, reading, nature, seeks genuine, caring gent, 36-49, N/S. London. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 333815**

VERY pretty funny slim brunette, 39, fit and active, seeks good looking guy for fun romance and more. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354653**

TALL blue eyed blonde, curvy and fun, loves dancing, seeks tall well built guy to share happy times and see what the future brings. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354651**

ROCKEFELLER 38, medium build, fair, funny, bubbly, likes conversation, seeks male for good times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 353359**

KIND professional clean shaven gent, sought by petite, attractive lady, 51 for discreet daytime relationship. West Sussex. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382982**

ATTRACTIVE intelligent blonde, full of life, seeks tall, good looking, well built male for uncomplicated fun times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355275**

SHY curvy blonde, 21, likes R&B, clubbing, meals out/in, seeks dark, good looking, slim guy who knows how to press the right buttons. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355273**

BEAUTIFUL slim brunette, big brown eyes, 39, kind and gentle nature, seeks similar kind male for quality/fun times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355243**

ATTRACTIVE female 38, blue eyes, blonde hair, WLTM nice looking slim/well built man to share life, love and special times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355241**

CURVY blue eyed blonde, many interests, seeks well built male who's looking for an uncomplicated relationship with a real woman. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355239**

HAPPY attractive, versatile black female, 37, 5ft 7ins, slim, likes reading, music, nature, seeks N/S, genuine gent, 35-48 to share life, laughter. London. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 333815**

ATTRACTIVE black lady, 5ft 6ins, black hair, slim, kissable lips, likes walks, horse riding, go karts, seeks professional white male, 35-45, athletic, 5ft 11ins-6ft. London. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 353897**

CURVY blue eyed brunette, 23, fun loving and bubbly, likes wild nights out but would prefer cosy nights in with a special fun loving older male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355271**

PETITE curvy female, witty and fun, always on the go, many interests WLTM intelligent outgoing male for good times. Looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355269**

BEAUTIFUL slim, Oriental babe, 22, seeks older, generous guy 65 plus who knows how to pamper. London. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 348545**

PRETTY happy go lucky lady, no ties, seeks tall, slim, attractive guy with big heart as well as personality for fun friendship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 352675**

QUIET smart, brown eyed lady, likes meals out and dancing, WLTM laidback mature man to share laughter/TLC. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 352673**

CURVY brunette, loving but a bit of a dreamer looking to share special times together with likeminded easygoing male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 352671**

PRETTY black lady, 39, 36G bust, 5ft 3ins, likes reading, cinema, meals out, nature, travel, theatre, seeks tall, slim, professional white male, 35-50 who is honest, genuine, loving, funny and spiritual. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355311**

LADY 44, GSOH, short, curvy, dark hair, seeks good guy for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355391**

HAPPY fun loving, attractive, black female, 38, 5ft 7ins, slim, likes theatre, reading, music, nature, seeks N/S, genuine caring gent, 35-48 to share life and laughter. London. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 333815**

BLACK female, likes meals out, theatre, seeks solvent white male, 30-47 for genuine relationship. Ashford. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382910**

LADY 50, West Sussex, seeks generous romantic for discreet, special daytime fun, no strings. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382870**

BEAUTIFUL slim brunette, will try anything once, varied interests, seeks laid back male for friendship, good conversations and more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 353679**

REAL party girl, blonde, 34, attractive and funny, looking for similar guy who also knows how to have a good time. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 353663**

ATTRACTIVE fun, friendly blonde, seeks fun guy. Sutton. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382502**

TINY attractive fun loving lady, likes to cook romantic meals, music and dancing, WLTM medium built likeminded male for loving LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 352119**

ADORABLE beauty, curvy, caring, down to earth, trained lawyer, seeks good man for friendship, companionship, maybe more. London. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 351337**

LOVELY green eyed brunette likes long romantic walks, seeks tall, outgoing male with GSOH to light up her life. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 351343**

TALL slim blonde, 46, loves to travel looking for someone genuine and honest to share cosy evenings in with a bottle of wine, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 351341**

DOWN to earth, slim brunette, curves in all the right places, looking for easygoing, fun guy for some relaxed fun times. Looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 353415**

LIVELY curvy blue eyed blonde, very active, seeks hunky energetic, likeminded guy with to get to know and hang out with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354615**

CURVY strawberry blonde, 26, baby blue eyes, seeks fun loving tactile guy for friendship, hopefully more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355245**

TALL female, medium build, bubbly, chatty, likes nights in, cooking, days out, seeks interesting male for friendship, maybe more. Worthing. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 353357**

VICKY attractive, kind, down to earth, black British, likes travel, writing, reading, cooking, socialising, seeks generous, good man who is family orientated. Essex. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 353033**



OUTGOING blonde bombshell, 44, gorgeous green eyes, caring male who is also looking for lots of fun and TLC. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 353655**

CURVY young looking widow loves dancing, nights out, but would prefer cosy nights in with that special male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 353483**

MISCHIEVOUS female, feminine, attractive, cultured, likes arts, music seeks strong minded male for friendship/companionship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354619**

WARM hearted female, curves in all the right places, new to area, seeks intelligent male to share interests, friendship and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 353419**

LOVELY lady, 48, beautiful curves, many interests, just wants to meet an honest decent guy and make him happy. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 353417**

60YR old female, seeks special N/S, non drinking gent, loving and caring for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 353253**

BERYL 70 plus, 5ft 6ins, slim, fair hair, green eyes, seeks gent who likes travel, theatre, sports, meals out. Hampshire. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 353165**

OLD fashioned girl, 49, fun, friendly, seeks mature male for fun times, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382192**

KAREN 51, smoker, many interests, seeks country loving guy, 35-45 who is fun, loving and caring. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382050**

LYN young 50yr old lady, divorced, attractive, size 16, black hair, green eyes, no ties, dog, likes walks, meals out, nights in, socialising, seeks gent, 40-55. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 350023**

STUNNING blonde, feels life is for living looking for her Mr Right, 45-55, who can make her feel special. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 350723**

CURVY blonde, big blue eyes, many interests WLTM genuine male to make her laugh and brighten up her day. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 350721**

STUNNING slim green eyed blonde, fun to be with, likes nights out, looking for that special someone. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 350691**

YOUNG black female, likes meals out, theatre, seeks solvent white male 30-47 for genuine relationship. Ashford. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382706**

VOLUPTUOUS bubbly female with red hair, 32, outgoing and fun, seeks genuine, down to earth male to enjoy life and love with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354649**

BEAUTIFUL slim blonde 38, loving, sensitive and a hopeless romantic, looking for love with similar tactile male to be her best mate. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354647**

PETITE curvy cuddly blonde, hazel eyes, much love to give, seeks romantic, tactile male for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354625**

SMALL attractive black haired female, 23, WLTM someone special for a happy loving future together. Age/looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354621**

PRETTY blonde with lovely green eyes seeks male for good conversation and companionship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 349901**

AFFECTIONATE curvy green eyed brunette seeking fit active man to share new adventures with. Looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 349919**

LOVELY green eyed brunette, creative and artistic, loves to feel the wind in her hair seeks inspirational male to end her loneliness. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 353637**

ATTRACTIVE petite blonde, baby blue eyes, many interests, seeks similar outgoing male to spend quality time with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 353635**

CURVY green eyed brunette, 45, easygoing and fun, looking to share precious moments with that special someone. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 353633**

Men Seeking

YOUNG good looking, medium build male, mid 30's, seeks mature, older female for fun and passionate evenings in this cold weather. London/Herts. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354877**

GRAHAM 55, 5ft 11ins, dark hair, brown eyes, medium build, N/S, friendly, reliable, genuine, GSOH, easygoing, honest, tactile, likes most things, seeks attractive, slim-medium, N/S female, 45-55. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383156**

FUN loving guy 50, 5ft 10ins, seeks outgoing, feminine, mature female, 45-60 for TLC. London. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354803**

SINGLE professional Indian male, N/S, attractive, 5ft 7ins, medium build, vegetarian, 50, young outlook, seeks white female for relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354781**

LOVELY warm 60 plus lady sought for special friendship with late 50's male, full heart, empty wallet. GSOH. Surrey/Sussex. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383192**

TOY boy 20's, seeks Mrs Claus for a fantastic Christmas full of lust and passion. London. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354925**

MALE 55, passionate, lots of TLC to give adventurous, broadminded lady looking for soul mate. Hampshire. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354851**

50'S and still sexy, looking for a pleasant, passionate man who will hit the right buttons. Me 55, just call. Portsmouth. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354849**

STEVE 42, medium build, genuine, seeks nice female for love and family life. Basingstoke. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355193**

IF you are over 50, not over the hill, naughty man over 55 who will be a challenge awaits your call. Waterlooville. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355105**

NICE guy 52, average build, seeks curvy female, 24-45 for LTR. Wembley. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 353355**

PROFESSIONAL successful male, 45, 6ft, fit, adventurous, fun loving, romantic, seeks attractive, outgoing female to enjoy the good things in life. Brighton. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 353349**

51YR old retired chef, 5ft 8ins, Irish/Italian, down to earth, seeks petite female, any age/looks. Eastbourne. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382806**

DAVID 51, divorced, shy, 5ft 7ins, seeks female for friendship, 45 plus. Worthing. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382784**

MALE seeks slim female, 38-48 with varied interests. S London. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 353017**

SLIM 52yr old male, 5ft 9ins, N/S, lots of love to give, seeks similar aged female to share life together. Crawley. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 352865**

CHRIS 49, own home, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. Portsmouth. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 353977**

MALE youthful 60's, slim, N/S, mild OCD, likes most things, seeks similar, attractive, kind, genuine female for relationship. East Grinstead. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 352363**

ANOTHER Christmas that's not enjoyable? Sincere gent, 49, seeks lady, 35-45 to celebrate, exchange presents, party and shop till we drop. Think about it, its time to change. Lindfield. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383122**

MARK single dad, likes stock cars, nights in/out, seeks female for fun and friendship. Horley. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383112**

32YR old male, 6ft 3ins, attractive, seeks similar age, attractive female for good times. Crawley. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354563**

WHITE male, 52, likes cinema, holidays, weekends away, seeks sincere, genuine, black lady, 35 plus for serious relationship. London. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354543**

MALE seeks female, 27-30 for fun and friendship. Croydon. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354465**

PROFESSIONAL successful male, 45, 6ft, adventurous, fun loving, romantic, seeks attractive, outgoing female to enjoy the good things in life with. Brighton. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355361**

DAVE 54, WLTM lady for discreet friendship and fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355433**

DIVORCED male, 55, 5ft 8ins, medium build, Libra, GSOH, OHAC, seeks female friend for safe adult fun. Discretion assured. Hemel Hempstead. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355407**

PAUL 61, N/S, likes walks, museum, coast, seeks passionate, adventurous, blonde female, 40-65 for LTR. Cuddly build preferred. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 355305**

DAVE 60, 5ft 11ins, caring, romantic, seeks female, 40 plus, size 14-16 to chill out for fun times. Portsmouth. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354789**

GOOD times ahead with 50's sensible guy, GSOH, medium build, likes all things cultural, travel, seeks lady with similar interests for friendship, maybe more. NW London. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383024**

YOUNG 60yr old Bexhill man, likes cats, travel, cooking, seeks genuine female, looks unimportant it what's inside, 54-70. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383016**

MARCUS 35, 6ft 1ins, dark hair, average build, good looking, sporty, many interests, seeks female/couple for fun times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383064**

TALL attractive, intelligent male, 46, seeks funny, sexy, female lover for passionate meetings. S Wilts. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354685**

MICHAEL 44, 5ft 10ins, medium build, seeks naughty female for fun and lots more. Reigate. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354133**

ATTRACTIVE blond, blue eyed male, 47, HIV positive, genuine, sincere, GSOH, OHAC, seeks warm, sincere, Oriental/black/Asian female. Essex. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354749**

YOUNG looking 60yr old guy, 5ft 7ins, brown hair/eyes, likes lunches out, seeks slim-medium build female for friendship only. Crawley. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354713**

HASTINGS male, 46, 5ft 10ins, medium build, blue eyes, fair hair, GSOH, chatty, romantic, caring, likes walks, cycling, cosy times, seeks similar female, 29-48 for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383050**

MUCH too young to be 57, hard-working, nice guy, slim, 5ft 6ins, smoker, smart/casual, missing female company, likes most things, looking for a fun LTR. Hastings. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383032**

52YR old male, slim, 5ft 9ins, N/S, lots of love, care, attention to give to female of similar age. Crawley. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354211**

6FT 2ins black guy, seeks female for no strings fun times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383028**

CURVES quest! Tall, slim, artist chap, seeks buxom, voluptuous lady for movie going and popcorn lunching. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354331**

PROFESSIONAL male, N/S, moderate drinker, seeks black/Oriental female, 35-43 for LTR. London. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383058**

GENUINE nice guy young 50's, romantic, tactile, solvent, GSOH, likes music, countryside, DIY, car boots, candlelit cuisine, seeks cuddly, attractive lady. Haslemere. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 353843**

LOCAL Andover male, seeks local Andover female, 30-50 for loving, lasting relationship. N/S with no children. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 353787**

EASYGOING fun loving guy 6ft 2ins, mousey hair, blue/grey eyes, likes pubs, clubs, walks, motorbikes, seeks soul mate. Littlehampton. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382948**

ATTRACTIVE blond, blue eyed male, HIV positive, extremely genuine, sincere, GSOH, OHAC, seeks warm, sincere, Oriental/Black/Asian female. Essex. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 353693**

26YR old tall male, dark complexion, handsome, caring, seeks female, 18-40 for kisses, cuddles nights in/out and love. Portsmouth. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 354131**

ROGER 68, 5ft 11ins, N/S, romantic, GSOH, dependable, sincere, easygoing, seeks slim-medium build, attractive female for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 352669**

6FT 2ins male, slim, N/S, brown hair/eyes, average looks, likes nights in/out, country pubs, animals, seeks similar lady for LTR. East Sussex. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382644**

MICK 52, 6ft 1ins, honest, reliable, loyal, seeks similar female, 40-50. Brighton. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382632**

Gay Seeking

YOUNG 60yr old male, likes animals, cats, tv, cooking, seeks TV/CD, 50-70 for LTR. Bexhill. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383018**

TALL white, good looking guy, London, non scene, straight acting, 29, seeks older, retired gent, 65 plus. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 348543**

ASSERTIVE male, 55, seeks sub male, 40-65. Redhill. Surrey/Sussex /Kent. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381648**

DISCREET gay male, attractive, 5ft 6ins, N/S, easygoing, submissive nature, seeks older assertive male for fun and friendship. Portsmouth. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 352387**

38YR old male, bi curious, seeks likeminded male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382304**

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'Blockheads' win through to final

CREATIVE pupils from two Kent schools have won the regional First Lego League (FLL) competition.

Youngsters from Simon Langton Grammar for Boys in Canterbury and Norton Knatchbull in Ashford teamed up to build and programme a Lego robot to perform specific tasks. They now advance to the FLL UK and Ireland final at Loughborough University, on Saturday, January 22.

Competition founder Dean Kamen said: "Every First Lego League challenge of the last 11 years has helped children discover how imagination and creativity, combined with science and technology, can solve real-world problems."

Nursing ambition

A MAIDSTONE nurse has been chosen to appear on a new NHS careers website to inspire others to join the profession.

Lee Busher was inspired to train as a nurse following his role as a first-aider.

After completing his diploma in 2007 he eventually became lead resuscitation officer for Kent and Medway NHS Social Care Partnership Trust.

He said: "I hope my story will help to inspire other potential nurses and encourage more people to consider nursing as a profession."

Visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/nursing for more information.

Joining the Get Set

ST JOHN'S Catholic Primary School in Gravesend has joined the Get Set Network in preparation for the 2012 Olympics.

The network is a special community of schools that are demonstrating a commitment to the Olympic values and using the forthcoming games to inspire children to get involved.

Co-ordinator Eddie McGuigan said: "This is a great opportunity for the children to get involved with the Olympic dream, work with other schools and get access to lots of exciting resources."

Fellowship of the strings

By **STEVE KNIGHT**
steve.knight@kosmedia.co.uk

THE Kent-born head of Classic FM has been awarded an honorary fellowship by Canterbury Christ Church University.

Darren Henley, who grew up in Tunbridge Wells and was educated in Ramsgate and Canterbury, started his career making tea at Invicta Radio (now Heart) and worked his way up to become managing director of the world's largest classical music radio station.

He picked up his fellowship alongside county councillor Leyland Ridings – who served as a governor of the university between 1988 and 2009 – at a ceremony in Canterbury Cathedral.

Mr Henley said: "Christ Church has gained a reputation both for excellence and innovation on a national and international stage.

"I'm deeply touched to have been chosen for an honorary fellowship by a university in my home city."



IN TUNE: Darren Henley, flanked by Christ Church's vice-chancellor Robin Baker, left, and pro-chancellor Peter Hermitage

As well as being the station's managing director, Mr Henley also writes regularly for Classic FM Magazine and is the co-author of all three titles in the best-selling Classic FM pocket book series.

Vice-chancellor Professor Robin Baker said: "The university enjoys a close working relationship with Darren Henley and Classic FM.

"We are delighted to confer a fellowship upon Darren in recognition of his outstanding career and influence in the broadcast and classical music industries."

Meanwhile, Cllr Ridings – KCC deputy cabinet member for children, families and education (vulnerable children) – was honoured for his significant charity and community work in the county.

He said: "I've participated in almost 40 processions over the years but this was the first time I'd stepped inside the cathedral as an honorary fellow. It was a special and moving event which made me feel among friends.

"I am delighted to have contributed to the university's development and will continue to be involved as a trustee of the students' union. I feel great pride to become an honorary fellow of Canterbury Christ Church University."

Moved to tears by Judy docu-drama

AUDIENCE members broke down in tears when drama students performed their own version of the emotional drink-drive documentary Too Much Punch for Judy.

The cast – who are studying for their BTEC National Diplomas – performed for families and teachers at the New Line Learning Academy in Loose, near Maidstone.

They replayed the harrowing true story of a young woman who killed her sister in an alcohol-related road accident in 1983. Ten years later the same woman was responsible for another road death while drunk and high on cannabis.

Drama teacher Tabbi Holness said: "Too Much Punch for Judy is powerful and moving. The students have been working as a professional company in workshops and rehearsals since October, and I was very impressed with the focus, dedication and talent of the cast.

"We intend to take this show on tour to local secondary schools.

"One of drama's greatest attributes is the potential it has to educate people and change the world, and the students' performance moved some members of the audience to tears.

"If our performance makes one person think twice about drinking and driving, then it will have been a success."



IMPRESSIVE: Members of Too Much Punch for Judy cast



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You will need to be able to respond to people in a professional manner and have good communication skills

Should you wish to discuss this role informally please contact Karl Grice or Smita Derodra on 01795 590212.

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Interview date: Monday 17 January 2011.

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Marlowe Academy

Required for January 2011

PAT and Asset Control Assistant

Part-time 20 hours per week all year round
One year fixed term contract
Salary: Academy Pay Scale 2; Pay Band 5 pro rata
Equates to £7,291 p.a.

We require a PAT and Asset Control Assistant to join our Finance and Admin team based at The Marlowe Academy with regular attendance at The Folkestone and Spires Academies.
You will be responsible for maintaining fixed asset registers for all sites in the Academy Group together with the inspection and testing of portable and fixed electrical equipment.
Closing Date: Friday 7th January 2011
Full details and an application form are available from our website: www.marloweacademy.co.uk.
Alternatively contact Marion Wigington on 01843 598550 or via email: m.wigington@spiresacademy.com
The Marlowe Academy is committed to the safeguarding of children and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This post is subject to an enhanced CRB check and satisfactory references. The Marlowe Academy is an equal opportunities employer.



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Tel: **01795 669824**



Marlowe Academy

Required for January 2011

Office & Records Supervisor

Part-time 27.5 hours per week all year round, with possibility of increasing to full-time
One Year Fixed Term Contract
Salary: Academy Pay Scale 3; Pay Band 7 pro rata
Equates to £10,635

We require a dynamic, enthusiastic Office & Records Supervisor to join our Finance and Admin team based at The Marlowe Academy with regular attendance at The Folkestone and Spires Academies
As part of your role you will lead our Marlowe admin team and ensure the delivery of excellent customer service.
In addition you will act as primary contact for Freedom of Information requests for all group academies.
Closing Date: Friday 7th January 2011
Full details and an application form are available from our website: www.marloweacademy.co.uk.
Alternatively contact Marion Wigington on 01843 598550 or via email: m.wigington@spiresacademy.com
The Marlowe Academy is committed to the safeguarding of children and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This post is subject to an enhanced CRB check and satisfactory references. The Marlowe Academy is an equal opportunities employer.

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Town and Country Planning Acts

The Council is required to give notice of the following applications

10/03892/LBC **Lees Court The Green, Brenchley**
- Listed Building Consent - External alterations to windows and doors due to changes to internal layout following Listed Building Consent TW/10/03041/LBC (LB)

10/03957/HOUSE **The Hay Loft High Street, Brenchley**
- Single-storey rear extension (LB) (CA)

10/03959/LBC **The Hay Loft High Street, Brenchley**
- Listed building Consent - Single-storey rear extension (LB)

10/04004/HOUSE **Hartridge Manor Farm Paley Lane, Cranbrook And Sissinghurst**
- Proposed relocation/design of approved detached garage (TW/09/03533/HOUSE) and alternative materials to be used on external walls (LB)

10/03937/LBC **27 Church Road Royal Tunbridge Wells, Culverden**
- Listed Building Consent - Formation of through room to ground floor (LB)

10/03879/FUL **Taywell Farm Shop Cranbrook Road, Goudhurst**
- Variation of Condition 7 of TW/05/03340/FUL - 85% of goods sold to be produced on the farm (LB)

10/03949/HOUSE **Paynetts Farm Cranbrook Road, Goudhurst**
- Extension to existing garage blocks and proposed car port (LB)

10/03967/LBC **2 Hickmots Cottages High Street, Lamberhurst**
- Listed Building Consent - Flood protection barriers and covers (LB)

10/03975/LBC **Coggers Hall School Hill, Lamberhurst**
- Listed Building Consent - Flood protection works including removable flood protection boards and other works (LB)

10/03873/FUL **Freelancers Ltd The Meeting House, Pantiles & St Marks**
- Removal of condition 6 of TW/08/03177 restricting hours of use for air conditioning units (CA)

10/03936/HOUSE **The Old Bothy Pembury Road, Park**
- Extension and alterations to private dwelling, demolition of park boundary wall, lean to, porch and outbuildings; New garaging, garden room, walls, pergola and associated works (CA)

10/03938/CAC **The Old Bothy Pembury Road, Park**
- Conservation Area Consent - Demolition of part boundary wall, lean-to, porch and outbuildings (CA)

(DEVPLN) Departure from the Development Plan (PROW) Affecting A Public Right of Way (CA) Affecting a Conservation Area (LB) Affecting a Listed Building (MAJOR) Major Applications (MAST) Mast Applications (EIA) Applications Accompanied by an EIA Statement.

You may view these applications on our website (www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk), at the The Old Fire Station, Stone Street, Cranbrook or at Gateway, 8 Grosvenor Road, Tunbridge Wells. We accept comments online, by email to planningcomments@tunbridgewells.gov.uk or in writing to the address below. Comments should be made within 21 days from the date of this notice, although we may accept them after this date.

You should quote the reference and be aware that we make all comments available for inspection, placing them on the file and publishing them on the internet. We do not publish signatures, telephone numbers or email addresses on the internet.

Jim Kehoe
Head of Planning Services
Town Hall Royal Tunbridge Wells TN1 1RS

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Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Traffic Area Office, Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to making representations is available from the Traffic Commissioners' Office.

Highways - Borough of Dartford and In the District of Sevenoaks

VARIOUS ROADS, DARENTH AND SOUTH DARENTH - (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2010 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council intends to make an Order restricting the use by vehicular traffic on Various Roads, Darenth and South Darenth as noted in schedule 1.

The Order will become effective on 17th January 2011, will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months; the event is planned to last 1 day between 09.00 – 12.00. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the above restriction will be via: as noted in schedule 1.

Schedule 1

Road name:	**Roman Villa Road, South Darenth**
Extent:	Between its junctions with Darenth Hill and Holmesdale Hill
Diversion:	Marshalls will be giving motorists diversion advice
Road name:	**Rabbits Road, South Darenth**
Extent:	Between its junctions with Shrubbery Road and Canada Farm Road
Diversion:	Shrubbery Road, Holmesdale Hill, St Margrets Road and B260 Green Street Green Road
Road name:	**Gills Road, South Darenth**
Extent:	Between its junctions with Holmesdale Hill and B260 Green Street Green Road
Diversion:	B260 Green Street Green Road, A225 Princes Road, A225 Hawley Road, A225 Main Road and Devon Road
Road name:	**Wilson Lane, South Darenth**
Extent:	Between its junctions with Gills Road and Rabbits Road
Diversion:	B260 Green Street Green Road, A225 Princes Road, A225 Hawley Road, A225 Main Road and Devon Road
Road name:	**Canada Farm Road, South Darenth**
Extent:	Between its junctions with Three Gates Road and B260 Green Street Green Road
Diversion:	B260 Green Street Green Road, A225 Princes Road, A225 Hawley Road, A225 Main Road and Devon Road
Road name:	**NO ENTRY to St Margarets Road, Darenth**
Extent:	From B260 Green Street Green Road
Diversion:	B260 Green Street Green Road, A225 Princes Road, A225 Hawley Road, A225 Main Road and Devon Road
Road name:	**NO ENTRY to Darenth Hill, Darenth**
Extent:	From B260 Green Street Green Road
Diversion:	B260 Green Street Green Road, A225 Princes Road and A225 Hawley Road

The purpose of the closure is to facilitate the event, Les Witton Dartford 10KM.

Highways - Borough of Gravesham

VARIOUS ROADS, GRAVESEND - (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2010 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council intends to make an Order restricting the use by vehicular traffic on Various Roads, Gravesend as noted in schedule 1.

The Order will become effective on 17th January 2011, will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months; the works are planned to last 18 months. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the above restriction will be via: Christian Fields Avenue and Warrior Avenue.

Schedule 1

Road Name:	**Palmer Avenue**
Extent:	Between its junctions with Beckett Mews to outside 91 Palmer Avenue
Road Name:	**Hawkins Avenue**
Extent:	Between its junctions with Ferguson Avenue to Palmer Avenue

The purpose of the closure is to facilitate continued redevelopment of Christian Fields Estate.

Highways – District of Shepway

RADNOR STREET, FOLKESTONE (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2010 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is given that because of gas mains replacement works, the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting through traffic on Radnor Street, Folkestone, on or after 4 January 2011 for up to 6 weeks or until the works have been completed.

The road will be closed at the junction with Tram Road. There will be no access for though traffic between Tram Road and The Stade area.

The alternative routes are

East bound (to The Stade) via A260 Tontine Street, A2033 Dover Road, Southern Way, Warren Road, Wear Bay Crescent, Wear Bay Road, East Cliff Gardens, The Durlocks and North Street.

West bound (from The Stade) via North Street, The Durlocks, East Cliff Gardens, Wear Bay Road, Wear Bay Crescent, Warren Road and Tram Road.

Please note this date is different to both dates previously publicised.

Highways - Borough of Tonbridge & Malling

(ISMAY ROAD, IGHTHAM) (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2010 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

NOTICE is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out on or near a road the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting the use by through traffic on Ismay Road Ightham from the junction of Sandy Lane, Ismay Road and the junction of Teebs Way, on or after Tuesday 18th January 2011 for a period of up to 1 days or until such works are completed.

The alternative route for the route described above is via Common Road and Sandy Lane and vice versa.

BT apologise for any inconvenience caused by these essential works, which are necessary to complete tree cutting and overhead cabling works.. Should you require any further information about these works, their contact is Mandy Richardson on 08700500792

For further information or comment please call Kent Highway Services on 08458 247 800.

(OLD HADLOW ROAD, TONBRIDGE) (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

NOTICE is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out on or near a road the Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting the use by through traffic on Old Hadlow Road from outside number 37 to the junction of Stair Road on or after Monday 17th January 2011 for a period of up to 4 weeks or until such works are completed.

The alternative route is via Old Hadlow Road, Cornwallis Avenue, Old Hadlow Road.

Southern Water apologise for any inconvenience caused by these works, which are necessary to up size an existing sewer for a new development. Should you require any further information for these works, the contact is Alan Skipper of Clancy Docwra on 01273 663650.

KATHERINE KERSWELL, Group Managing Director, Kent County Counci, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent ME14 2XQ

For further information, please contact Kent Highway Services, on 08458 247 800 (local rate) or visit www.kent.gov.uk/highways

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It's six of the best for 2011

By **STEVE LOADER**

CARMAKERS love to trumpet the wonderful innovations they have delivered in answer to the global double-whammy – recession and warming.

But they would have been quite happy to carry on selling the same old unreconstructed technology and styling of old had they not been forced to change.

Instead, we have an exciting and brave new world of alternative powertrains, more aerodynamic styling, new technology tyres that deliver good grip yet waste less fuel, and many other new tricks.

And despite the advent of petrol and diesel-electric hybrids, electric cars and even the promise of hydrogen power, the long-running internal combustion engine has shown it can be re-modelled to suit the new era; many manufacturers have tweaked the old stager to deliver more power yet bring lower fuel consumption and emissions.

As a result, 2011 is set to be a pivotal year for the industry and here are some of the star cars to come:

1) Ford Focus – a terrific looking replacement for what was the UK's best-selling car until overtaken by the Fiesta. Interestingly, the new car is as radically different in looks as the outgoing second generation Focus is conventional, so it could yet put the Focus name back at number one.

2) Honda Jazz Hybrid – already one of the most versatile superminis/MPVs, and this new version employs Honda's renowned experience in petrol-electric powertrains to create one of the most economical and eco-friendly cars in its class.

3) Range Rover Evoque – this luxury SUV (sports utility vehicle) will be the smallest car to wear the Land Rover premium badge and signals where the 4x4/SUV sector is going in terms of scale, style and marketing. The last point is strongly made by the fact the Evoque will be the first Land Rover model offered with a fuel-saving front-wheel drive option.

4) Lexus CT200h – Toyota's luxury arm could really shake up the company car sector with the first model to allow thrusting young executives to maintain status while saving on company car tax and running costs, and flaunting their green credentials.

5) Vauxhall Astra three-door – you may wonder why this is here, but Vauxhall's decision to make the previous three-door Astra more obviously sporty, paid big dividends in terms of the car's image and sales and the new sporty shape looks terrific on what is already a great car.

6) Nissan Leaf – electric power has had a 'la-la land' label so far, but the new Leaf is a proper five-door family hatchback. Admittedly, it still costs £24,000 despite a £5,000 grant from the Government. Once bought though, you can charge it up from the mains for just a few pence, and it is also exempt from road tax and – commuters take note – the London congestion charge. Nissan has unveiled a PCP deal too that allows the car to be run for less than £400 a month.

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05 05 MAZDA 3 3 TS2
Saloon Aluminium Silver, Petrol 1999cc, 5-Speed Manual, 59,000 miles
£4,999



03 03 VAUXHALL ASTRA
Coupe Convertible 16v, Silver, Petrol 1796cc, 5sp Manual, 70,000 miles
£3,999



05 54 RENAULT SCENIC VVT
MPV, Norse Grey Met, Petrol 1998cc, 6-Speed Manual , 66,000 miles
£3,999



07 S SAAB 9-3 VECTOR
Anniversary TDi Convertible, 1910cc, 6 sp Manual, 41,000 miles
£11,799



05 55 LEXUS S 430
V8 Automatic Saloon, Petrol, 4293cc, 36500 Miles
£13,499



06 56 FORD FOCUS C-MAX
Zetec Auto MPV, Petrol, 1999cc, 24,500 miles
£6,499



07 07 MINI COOPER
3dr Hatchback, Petrol, 1598cc, 6 sp Manual, 25,010 miles
£9,499



08 08 HONDA CIVIC SE I-VTEC
5dr Hatchback, Petrol, 1799cc, 6 sp Manual, 32,000 miles
£8,999



04 54 MINI COOPER S
3dr Hatchback, Petrol, 1598cc, 6 sp Manual, 44,000 miles
£7,999



05 55 BMW 116I SE
5dr, Hatchback, Petrol, 1596cc, 5 speed, 58,000 miles
£7,949



05 05 VOLKSWAGEN BEETLE
8v Convertible,Petrol, 1596cc, 5 sp Manual, 35,000 miles
£6,999



03 V VAUXHALL ZAFIRA ELEGANCE
Dti 16v, MPV, Blue, Turbo Diesel 1995cc, 5-Speed Manual, 70,000 miles
£4,499



07 57 PEUGEOT 307
SW SE Automatic Estate, Petrol, 1587cc, Manual, 18,000 miles
£7,499



05 55 CITROEN BELINGO
Multi-Space Desire HDi Estate, Turbo Diesel, 1997cc, 40,000 miles
£4,999



04 04 PEUGEOT 206 GTI
3dr Hatchback, Petrol, 1997cc, 5sp manual, 41,000 miles
£3,999



06 06 HONDA CIVIC SPORT I-VTEC
5dr Hatchback, Petrol, 1799cc, 6 sp Manual, 50,000 miles
£6,999



02 02 MERCEDES-BENZ
CLK Cabriolet 200 K Avantgarde Automatic, Petrol, 1998cc, 82,000 miles
£6,949



05 55 RENAULT SCENIC DYNAMIQUE
16v, 44000 Miles
£4,999



08 08 CITROEN C3
Executive Plus Hdi 5dr Hatch, T/Diesel, 1560cc, 5 speed manual, 66,000 miles
£5,999



00 X LEXUS 300 SE
Automatic Saloon, Petrol, Petrol, 2997cc, 66,000 miles
£4,499



04 04 HONDA ACCORD
VTEC Executive Automatic Estate, Petrol, 2354cc, 89,000 miles
£5,999



04 53 PEUGEOT 206 SW S
Estate, Petrol, 1360cc, 5 speed Manual, 63,000 miles
£3,499



05 05 FORD FOCUS
Zetec Climate 16v 5dr Automatic Hatchback, Petrol, 1596cc, 49,000 miles
£5,499



VOLKSWAGEN BEETLE 16V
3dr Hatchback, Petrol, 1595cc, 5sp Manual, 84,000 miles
£3,499



04 04 CITROEN C2
GT 16v 3dr Hatchback, Petrol, 1587cc, 5 speed manual, 31,000 miles
£3,999



04 T MINI COOPER
Cabriolet, Petrol, 1598cc, 5 speed Manual, 46,000 miles
£8,490



07 07 DODGE CALIBER SXT
5dr Automatic Hatchback, Petrol, 1998cc, 39,000 miles
£5,999



01 Y SUBARU IMPREZA
GX Awd 5dr Automatic, Hatchback, Petrol, 1994cc, 52,000 miles
£3,499



04 54 TOYOTA YARIS T3 VVT-I
5dr Hatchback, Petrol, 1299cc, 5 sp Manual, 74,000 miles
£3,699



00 X RENAULT MEGANE
16v Sports Cabriolet, Petrol, 2000cc, Manual, 83,000 miles
£2,499

05 05 FORD TRANSIT 350I Motor Caravan Rimor in White, Diesel, 2400cc, 38,000 miles **£22,999**
07 57 PEUGEOT 207 GT COUPE Cabriolet, Black, Petrol, 1598cc, 5 sp Manual, 22,000 miles **£7,999**
07 B FORD FOCUS C-MAX ZETEC 125 MPV, Silver, Petrol, 1798cc, 5 sp Manual, 35,000 miles **£7,499**
04 J MINI COOPER S 3dr Hatchback, Grey, Petrol, 1598cc, 6 sp Manual, 72,000 miles **£6,999**
07 57 MAZDA 6 TAMURA 5dr Hatchback, Silver, Petrol, 1999cc, 6 sp Manual, 23,900 miles **£6,999**
06 06 FORD GALAXY GHIA TDi MPV, Aluminium Silver, 1896cc, 6 sp Manual, 70,000 miles **£6,999**
07 07 FORD FOCUS SPORT 5DR HATCHBACK, Blue, Petrol, 1798cc, 5 Sp Manual, 32,000 miles **£6,299**
06 06 MERCEDES-BENZ A170 Classic SE 5dr Hatchback, Petrol, 1699cc, 5 sp Manual, 18,000 miles **£6,299**
06 06 RENAULT MEGANE DYNAMIQUE 16V Convertible, Blue, Petrol, 1598cc, 58,000 miles **£5,999**
06 06 FORD FIESTA ZETEC CLIMATE 16V 3dr Hatchback, Blue, Petrol, 1388cc, 5sp manual, 44,000 miles **£4,999**
07 07 VAUXHALL MERIVA ENERGY 16V MPV, Blue, Petrol, 1598cc, 5 sp Manual, 18,000 miles **£4,999**
05 05 FORD TRANSIT CONNECT T200 L SWB PANEL VAN, White, Turbo Diesel, 1753cc, 5 sp manual, 75,000 miles **£4,999**
05 05 CITROEN C1 RHYTHM 5dr Hatchback, Met Grey, Petrol, 998cc, Manual, 40,000 miles **£4,299**
04 04 FORD FOCUS CL TDI 5dr Hatchback, Silver, 1753cc, 5 speed Manual, 46,000 miles **£4,299**

04 04 FORD FIESTA 16V 3dr Hatchback, Blue, Petrol, 1388cc, 5 sp Manual, 36,000 miles **£3,999**
03 03 HYUNDAI TRAJET GSI AUTOMATIC MPV, SILVER, PETROL, 1997CC, 49,000 MILES **£3,999**
06 06 HYUNDAI MATRIX GSI Automatic MPV in Silver, Petrol, 1599cc, 45,000 miles **£3,999**
03 03 HONDA CIVIC TYPE-S 5dr Hatchback, Silver, Petrol, 1998cc, 5sp manual, 81,000 miles **£3,999**
03 03 SUZUKI JIMNY JLX Estate in Silver, Petrol, 1328cc, 5 speed manual, 73,000 miles **£3,999**
05 05 DAIHATSU SIRION S 5dr Hatchback, Red, Petrol 998cc, 5 speed Manual, 75,000 miles **£3,499**
03 03 FORD MONDEO ZETEC 16V 5dr 87000 miles **£3,299**
02 02 VOLKSWAGEN BORA SPORT Saloon, Blue, Petrol, 1984cc, 5 speed Manual, 54,000 miles **£2,999**
02 52 FORD FIESTA ZETEC-S 3dr Hatchback, Silver, Petrol, 1596cc, Manual, 59,000 miles **£2,999**
02 02 VAUXHALL ASTRA ELEGANCE 16v 5dr Automatic Hatchback, Blue, Petrol, 1796cc, 49,828 Miles **£2,699**
05 54 SUZUKI ALTO L 5DR Hatchback, Silver, Petrol, 1061cc, 5 speed Manual, 35,000 miles **£2,699**
97 R TOYOTA MR2 2.0 GT 16v T Bar Coupe, Silver, Petrol, 5 sp Manual, 72,000 miles **£2,699**
03 52 NISSAN MICRA E 3DR (newshape), Silver, Petrol, 998cc, 5 speed Manual, 72,000 miles **£2,699**
03 52 FORD KA COLLECTION 3dr Hatchback, Blue, Petrol, 1299cc, 5 sp Manual, 65,000 miles **£2,499**
01 Y FORD FIESTA FREESTYLE 16V 5dr Hatchback, Green, Petrol, 1242cc, Manual, 69,000 miles **£2,199**

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CHRISTMAS OPENING TIMES

Friday 24th Dec	9am to 12pm
Saturday 25th Dec	CLOSED
Sunday 26th Dec	CLOSED
Monday 27th Dec	10am to 4pm
Tuesday 28th Dec	10am to 4pm
Wednesday 29th Dec	9am to 6pm
Thursday 30th Dec	9am to 6pm
New Years Eve	9am to 2pm
New Years Day	CLOSED
Sunday 2nd Jan	10am to 4pm
Monday 3rd Jan	10am to 4pm
Tuesday 4th Jan	10am to 4pm

BACK TO NORMAL HOURS



2008 Ford Mondeo 2.0 Edge 140 Tdci
5dr, Hatchback, Black, Turbo Diesel, 6-Speed Manual
Mileage 75000



07 57 Volkswagen Transporter 1.9 TDi T28 SWB 102 BHP
1 Owner, 97,000 miles, FSH, ABS, RCL, Immob, Side Loading door, CD, Ply Lined, White



02 51 Toyota Celica 1.8 VVT-i 3dr
6sp, 82k, FSH, AC, ABS, PAS, RCL, Immob, EW, CD, EM, Alloys, Met Blue



05 55 Volvo V50 2.4 SE
Semi-Auto Est, 1 owner, 59k mls, FDSH, AC, Cruise, ABS, PAS, RCL, immob, htd seats, SIPS, EW, ESR, CD, leather, alloys, Met Blue



05 05 Mitsubishi Evo 2.0 FQ-340 IX4 GSR 380 BHP
35,000 miles, FSH, AC, ABS, PAS, RCL, Immob, EW, Body Kit, EM, CD, Leather, Alloys, Flame Red

ESTATES, MPV'S & 4x4'S

05 55 Volvo V50 2.4 SE Semi-Auto Est, 1 owner, 59,000 mls, FDSH, AC, Cruise, ABS, PAS, RCL, immob, htd seats, SIPS, EW, ESR, CD, leather, alloys, Met Blue £8,495

07 57 Seat Alhambra 2.0 Tdi Reference Est, 7 seats, 6sp, 1 owner, 92,000 mile, FSH, ABS, PAS, RCL, immob, EW, CD, Met Blue £7,995

08 58 Ford Focus 1.8 TD Style 5dr Est, 1 owner, FSH, a/c, ABS, PAS, r/c/locking, immob, e/w, CD, in met black £7,495

08 08 Ford Focus 1.8 TDCi Style Est, 1 owner, 64000 miles, FSH, AC, ABS, PAS, RCL, Immob, EW, CD, Met Grey £6,695

07 07 Ford Focus 1.8 TDCi LX Est, 1 owner, 73,000 miles, FSH, AC, RCL, Immob, E/Htd Mirrors, CD in Tango £5,995

07 57 Mazda 6 TS 2.0D Est, 6 Spd, 1 Owner, FSH, AC, ABS, PAS, Cruise, RCL, Immob, CD, Alloys, Met Black £4,995

07 07 Vauxhall Astra 1.7 CTDI Club Est, 1 Owner, FSH, AC, Cruise, ABS, PAS, RCL, Immob, EM, CD, Met Silver £4,495

01 51 Volkswagen Golf 2.0 SE Auto Est, 2 Owners, 83,000 miles, FSH, Climate, ABS, PAS, RCL, Immob, EM, Htd Seats, CD, Met Green £2,995

02 02 Alfa Romeo 156 1.6 T-Spark Turismo Est, 3 Owners, 63,000 miles, FSH, AC, ABS, PAS, RCL, Immob, CD, Leather, Alloys, Met Silver £2,995

SALOONS, SPORTS & PRESTIGE

08 08 Volkswagen Passat 2.0 TDi SE 140 BHP, 6sp, 1 Owner, FSH, AC, ABS, PAS, ESP, EW, EDSeat, RCL, Immob, CD, Alloys, Met Grey £8,995

05 05 BMW 320 2.0D SE 6 Speed, FSH AC, ABS, PAS, cruise, RCL, Immob, E/W, CD, Alloys, Met Grey £8,695

05 05 Vauxhall Astra 2.0 Bertone Turbo Convertible, 28,000 miles, FSH, AC, ABS, PAS, Cruise, RCL, Immob, EW, Htd Seats, Alloys, Peacock Blue £6995

01 Y Subaru Impreza 2.0 WRX Turbo 4dr, 2 Owners, 75,000 miles, SH, AC, ABS, PAS, RCL, Immob, EW, CD, Alloys, Silver £4,995

03 03 Jaguar X-Type 2.5 V6 SE Auto 4dr, 88,000 miles, SH, AC, ABS, PAS, Cruise, RCL, Immob, EW, CD, Leather, Alloys, Met Gold £4,495

02 52 Peugeot 206 1.6 Coupe Convertible, 59,000 miles, FSH, AC, ABS, PAS, RCL, Immob, ER, EW, CD, Leather, Alloys, Met Blue £4,295

HATCHBACKS

08 08 NEW SHAPE Ford Mondeo 2.0 TDCi Edge 5dr, 6sp, 1 owner, 75,000 miles FSH, a/c, ABS, PAS, cruise, r/c/locking, immob, e/w, CD, in met black £7,695

05 55 Volkswagen Golf 1.4 S 5dr, 2 owners, 58,000k, FDSH, ABS, PAS, a/c, r/c/locking, immob, e/w, CD, in blue £5,995

07 57 Vauxhall Astra 1.3 Life CDTi 5dr, 6sp, 1 Owner, 48,000 miles, FSH, AC, ABS, PAS, RCL, Immob, EW, CD, Met Black ..£5,995

07 07 Ford Mondeo 2.0 LX TDCi 5dr , 1 Owner, 68,000 miles, FSH, AC, ABS, PAS, Cruise, RCL, Immob, EW, CD, Met Black £4,995

03 03 Mini Cooper 1.6 S 3dr, 6sp, FDSH, AC, ABS, PAS, CBC, RCL, Immob, EW, EM, CD, 1/2 Leather, Alloys, Met Grey £5,695

07 57 Mazda 6 TS 2.0D 143 BHP, 1 owner, 96,000 miles, AC, ABS, PAS, RCL, Immob, EW, EM, CD, Alloys, Met Silver £5,495

07 07 Ford Mondeo 2.0 TDCi LX 5dr, 6sp, 1 Owner, 71,000 miles, FSH, AC, ABS, PAS, Cruise, RCL, Immob, EW, EM, CD, Met Grey £4,995

07 57 Renault Clio 1.2 S Dynamique 16v Turbo 3dr, 1 owner, 62k, FSH, ABS, PAS, A/C, E/W, CD, Alloys in Met Blue £4,995

04 54 Volkswagen Golf 1.9 TDi SE, 2 owners, FSH, A/C, ABS, PAS, ESP, RCL, Immob, CD, Alloys in Met Silver £4,995

07 57 Ford KA 1.3 Style 3dr, 1 Owner, 37,000 miles, FSH, ABS, PAS, CL, Immob, EW, Radio/CD, Drivers Airbag, Cloth Trim, White £3,995

04 54 Vauxhall Vectra 1.8 Life 5dr , 96,000 miles, FSH, AC, ABS, PAS, CBC, RCL, Immob, EW, EM, CD, Met Silver £3,495

04 54 Renault Clio 1.2 16V Extreme 3 3DR, 1 owner, 51,000 mls, FDSH, ABS, PAS, r/c/locking, immob, sunroof, CD, e/w, in silver £3,495

COMMERCIALS

08 08 Mercedes Sprinter 311 2.2 CDi LWB Dropside, 6 speed, 1 owner. 117k miles, FSH, ABS, PAS, EW, CD, in White £9,995 +vat

07 07 FORD TRANSIT 100 2.4 TDi T350 MWB S/C TIPPER, 1 owner, 75,000 miles, FS, ABS, PAS, R/C/Locking, Immob, CD in White £7995 + vat

07 57 Mercedes Sprinter 331 2.4 CDi MWB, 6 speed, 1 owner, FSH, ABS, PAS, e/w, CD, side loading dr, in white £7,695 +vat

08 57 Mitsubishi L200 2.5 DI-D4 WORK, D/C, 1 owner, 80,000L, FSH, ABS, PAS, c/locking, immob, CD, r/d lock, in white £7,495 +vat

07 07 Mitsubishi L200 2.5 DI-D 4 Life Double Cab, 1 owner 63,000 miles, FSH, AC, ABS, PAS, CL, Immob, EW, CD, Side steps. In white £7,495 +vat

07 57 Volkswagen Transporter 1.9 TDi T28 SWB 102 BHP, 1 owner, 97,000 miles, FSH, ABS, PAS, RCL, immob, Side loading door, CD, Ply Lined, White £6,995 +vat

07 57 Mercedes Vito 109 2.2 CDi Xtra Long Van, 6sp, 1 owner, 111,000 miles, FSH, ABS, PAS, r/c/locking, immob, CD, ply lined, in white £6,995 +vat

06 56 Mercedes Vito 109 2.2 CDi Compact SWB, 6sp, 2 Owneras, 64,000 miles, FSH, ABS, PAS, ASR, RCL, Immob, EW, CD, Twin Side Loading Drs, White £6,995 +vat

07 07 Ford Transit 100 2.4 TDCi T350 LWB, 1 owner, 113k, FSH, ABS, PAS, R/C/L, Immob, CD, Met Silver £5,995 +vat

07 57 Mercedes Vito 2.2 CDi 109 LWB, 3 seater, 6sp, 1 Owner, 117,000 miles, FSH, ABS, PAS, RCL, Immob, CD, Ply Lined, Twin side loading drs, White £6,495 +vat

07 07 Vauxhall Astra 1.9 CDTi Sportive Van, 6sp, 1 owner, 79k, FSH, A/C, ABS, PAS, R/C/L, Immob, E/W, Alloys, Met Silver £5,495 +vat

07 07 Ford Transit 85 2.2D T280 SWB, 1 Owner, 87,000 miles, FSH, PAS, RCL, Immob, 3 Seater, CD, Ply Lined, White .£5,695 +vat

07 57 Ford Transit 85 2.2D T280 SWB, 3 seater, 1 Owner, 104,000 miles, ABS, PAS, ESP, RCL, Immob, CD, Ply Lined, Side loading dr, White £5,995 +vat

07 07 Ford Transit 100 2.4D T350 LWB, Mid Roof, 3 seater, 1 owner, 117,000 miles, ABS, PAS, RCL, Immob, CD, Ply lined, CD, Side loading dr, White £5,995 +vat

07 57 Ford Transit 85 2.2 TDCi T280 SWB, 3 seater, 1 owner, 103,000 miles, FSH, ABS, PAS, R/C/L, Immobiliser in White .£5,995 +vat

07 07 PEUGEOT EXPERT 1.9D 815 70, 3 SEATER, 1 owner, 60,000 miles, FS, C/Locking, Immob, CD, Ply Lined in White £4,995 +vat

08 57 Volkswagen Caddy 2.0 SDi 69PS, 1 Owner, 106,000 miles, ABS, PAS, ASR, RCL, Immob, CD, Ply Lined, White ..£4,995 +vat

07 07 Vauxhall Astravan 1.7 CDTi Sportive, 6sp, 110,000 miles, FSH, A/C, ABS, PAS, R/C/L, E/W, Immobiliser, Alloys, CD in White £4,495 +vat

07 07 Vauxhall Astra 1.7 CDTi Club Van, 6sp, 1 Owner, 82,000 miles, FSH, AC, EW, PAS, Roof rack, CD, RC Locking, Immob. In White £3,995 +vat

07 07 Vauxhall Astra 1.3 CDTi Club, 1 Owner, 70,000 miles, FSH, ABS, PAS, RCL, Immob, EW, CD, White £3,995 +vat

07 07 Vauxhall Astravan 1.3 CDTi Club, 6sp, 1 Owner, 61,000 miles, FSH, ABS, PAS, RCL, Immob, EW, CD, White £3,995 +vat

07 56 Vauxhall Astravan 1.3 CDTi Club, 6sp, 1 Owner, 61,000 miles, FSH, ABS, PAS, RCL, Immob, CD, Ply Lined, White £3,995 +vat



Volkswagen Caddy 2.0 C20 SDi Van
Air Bag, ABS, Power Steering, Remote Central Locking, Immobiliser, CD, Cloth Upholstery, Rear Wash/wipe, Height Adjustable Seat, Side Load Door, Twin Doorway



08 08 Volkswagen Passat 2.0 TDi SE est
6 Sp, 1 Owner, 64000 miles, FSH, AC, ABS, PAS, RCL, Immob, SIPS, EW, CD, Alloys, Met Silver



07 57 Ford Focus 1.8 TDCi Style 5dr
1 Owner, 47,000 miles, FSH, AC, ABS, PAS, RCL, Immob, Computer, CD, Met Blue



05 55 Ford Mondeo 3.0 V6 Titanium
6sp, 2 owners, 36,000 miles, FSH, AC, ABS, PAS, Cruise, RCL, Immob, EW, Auto Lights, Htd Seats, CD, Leather, Alloys, In Platinum



02 02 Alfa Romeo 1.6 T.spark Turismo Sportwagon
63000 miles, A/C, PAS, ABS, EW, CD, Alloys, Power steering, EM, service history

6 months Warranty
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FIRST GEAR

Compiled by Steve Loader



New junior Audi's one of the safest

AUDI'S new premium baby, the A1, has just been awarded the ultimate safety accolade – a maximum five-star NCAP safety rating for frontal, rear or side collision, as well as for child safety and pedestrian protection.

It makes the newcomer one of the safest small cars around and delivers further ammunition for its head-to-head battle with fellow premium package contender, the BMW Mini, plus the retro appeal of the Fiat 500.

The most junior Audi is priced from £13,145 to £18,280 and the engine options are turbocharged 1.2 and 1.4-litre petrol units and a 1.6-litre diesel – the last being capable of averaging more than 70mpg.

Standard A1 features include fuel and emission-saving engine start-stop function, energy recovery, alloy wheels, air con and ESP (electronic stability control).

Passat evolution number seven

VOLKSWAGEN'S seventh generation Volkswagen Passat arrives in January.

The saloon starts at £18,470 and the voluminous estate from £19,745 – the latter is expected to outsell the former for the first time.

Though the styling is more evolutionary than revolutionary, VW stresses that every panel and glass surface apart from the roof is new – the usual line when a carmaker is worried by early comments like "but it doesn't seem any different".

As ever though it looks classy and pressurises VW's own premium brand Audi and its rivals, especially in hard times.

VW has also underlined the Passat's overall economy; all diesels are now badged as eco-friendly BlueMotion models equipped with battery recharging via braking and Stop/Start systems.



This gives the entry-level 1.6-litre TDI an average mpg in the mid-60s and a barely road taxable 114 g/km of CO2 emissions.



Yaris upgrades

TOYOTA has enhanced its Yaris supermini line-up for 2011, with new high-spec T Spirit and SR models.

The T Spirit package (from £11,695) includes sat nav with Bluetooth and a USB port, eight-spoke alloys, climate control and rear parking sensors

The sporty SR (from £13,215) features Toyota Motorsport 16-inch alloys, roof spoiler, extra chrome detailing and rear privacy glass, plus sat nav and climate control.

Both new models, apart from offering extra value, also come with the world number one carmaker's five-year/100,000-mile warranty.

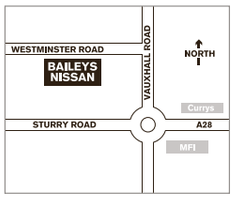
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CO_2 EMISSIONS	168 G/KM
VED BAND	H
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2000 SMART4TWO PASSION, semi-auto, alloys, CD, Silver, LHD, ...£1,995
1997 ROVER 200 1.6 3 dr AUTOMATIC, red with black trim, tax and MOT£1,495
1999 RENAULT MEGANE 1.6 RT 5 door hatch, red, with contrasting interior£995
1999 FORD MONDEO 2.0 LX 5 door hatch, silver£995

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AGILA

Year	Reg	Model	Eng	Dr	Colour	M/age	£
2009	09	Agila Design CDTi	1.3D	5	Atlantis blue	9,350	8,995

ASTRA

Year	Reg	Model	Eng	Dr	Colour	M/age	£
2006	06	Astra Active Estate	1.6	5	Silver lightening	18,950	5,995
2006	06	Astra Active	1.6	5	Ultra blue	37,000	5,995
2006	56	Astra Sxi	1.6	5	Metro blue	25,000	6,795
2006	56	Astra Active	1.6	5	Star silver	26,990	6,295
2007	08	Astra Sri X Pack	1.6TBO	3	Black sapphire	45,600	8,350
2008	08	Astra Sri X Pack	1.8	5	Silver lightening	15,870	8,495
2008	58	Astra Elite	1.6	5	Star silver	13,775	8,495
2008	09	Astra Sxi Sports hatch	1.4	3	Red	16,810	8,995
2009	09	Astra Breeze CDTi	1.7D	5	Silver lightening	8,875	9,995
2009	59	Astra Sports Twin top	1.8	2	Air blue	3,320	14,995
2009	59	Astra Active Sports hatch	1.4	3	Sovereign silver	8,040	9,995
2010	59	Astra VXR	2.0	3	Arden blue	5,660	16,995
2010	10	Astra Active	1.6	5	Star silver	5,010	11,495
2010	10	Astra Sri X Pack	1.8	3	Black sapphire	3,490	13,995
2010	10	Astra Sri CDTi	2.0	5	Black sapphire	3,330	18,995
2010	10	New Astra Sri CDTi	1.7D	5	Power red	4,880	15,995
2010	10	Astra Exclusive Auto	1.6	5	Silver lake	1,100	14,995
2010	10	New Astra Exclusive	1.4	5	Iceberg blue	3,000	12,995
2010	10	Astra Sport Sports hatch	1.4	3	Power red	2,065	11,995
2010	10	New Astra Exclusive	1.6	5	Technical grey	1,790	13,995
2010	10	New Astra Exclusive	1.6	5	Black sapphire	2,210	13,995
2010	10	Astra Exclusive	1.6	5	Sovereign silver	Delivery	14,995

CORSA

Year	Reg	Model	Eng	Dr	Colour	M/age	£
2007	07	Corsa Club	1.4	5	Star silver	17,050	6,850
2007	07	Corsa Life A/c	1.0	3	Flame red	42,500	5,395
2007	07	Corsa Life A/c	1.0	3	Flame red	44,500	5,395
2007	57	Corsa Design	1.2	3	Flame red	49,370	6,495
2008	08	Corsa Design	1.4	5	Star silver	15,575	6,875
2008	08	Corsa Breeze Plus	1.2	3	Silver lightening	16,900	7,495
2008	08	Corsa Breeze CDTi	1.3	3	Star silver	24,590	7,995
2008	08	Corsa Breeze CDTi	1.3	5	Flame red	41,275	7,295
2009	59	Corsa Sxi A/c	1.4	3	Silver lightening	800	9,495
2009	59	Corsa Active	1.0	3	Flame red	4,000	7,995
2009	59	Corsa Sxi A/c	1.2	3	Metro blue	5,990	8,995
2009	59	Corsa Active	1.2	3	Star silver	7,180	8,995
2010	59	Corsa Active CDTi	1.3D	3	Star silver	7,750	9,495
2010	10	Corsa Active CDTi	1.3D	5	Black sapphire	4,925	10,495
2010	10	Corsa Energy	1.2	3	Black sapphire	2,340	9,995
2010	10	Corsa Energy	1.2	3	Silver lightening	2,045	8,995
2010	10	Corsa Energy CDTi	1.3	3	Glacier white	2,800	10,995
2010	10	Corsa Energy	1.2	5	Metro blue	2,925	9,995
2010	10	Corsa SE	1.4	5	Beach green	4,740	10,995
2010	10	Corsa Celebrity	1.2	3	Flame red	Delivery	8,995
2010	10	Corsa Celebrity	1.2	3	Star silver	Delivery	9,495
2010	10	Corsa Celebrity	1.2	3	Star silver	Delivery	9,495
2010	10	Corsa Celebrity	1.2	3	Metro blue	Delivery	9,495
2010	10	Corsa Energy	1.2	3	Silver lake	Delivery	9,495

INSIGNIA

Year	Reg	Model	Eng	Dr	Colour	M/age	£
2009	09	Insignia Exclusive Plus Pack	1.8	5	Sovereign silver	11,400	11,995
2010	10	Insignia Exclusive CDTi	2.0	5	Star silver	6,395	15,495
2010	10	Insignia Exclusive CDTi	2.0	5	Black sapphire	10,180	14,995

MERIVA

Year	Reg	Model	Eng	Dr	Colour	M/age	£
2006	06	Meriva Design	1.4	5	Silver lightening	43,700	5,575
2007	57	Meriva Energy	1.4	5	Star silver	31,100	6,495
2008	58	Meriva Design X pack	1.8	5	Air blue	7,600	8,795

VECTRA

Year	Reg	Model	Eng	Dr	Colour	M/age	£
2007	07	Vectra Design	1.8	5	Star silver	26,180	7,295

ZAFIRA

Year	Reg	Model	Eng	Dr	Colour	M/age	£
2009	59	Zafira Active Plus	1.8	5	Ultra blue	5,670	13,495
2010	10	Zafira Energy	1.8	5	Sovereign silver	1,570	13,995
2010	10	Zafira Sri CDTi X Pack	1.9D	5	Black sapphire	5,225	17,995
2010	10	Zafira Energy	1.8	5	Black sapphire	4,325	13,995
2010	10	Zafira Life A/c	1.6	5	Ultra blue	4,690	12,995
2010	10	Zafira Energy CDTi	1.7D	5	Star silver	2,390	14,995

ANTARA

Year	Reg	Model	Eng	Dr	Colour	M/age	£
2008	58	Antara SE Auto CDTi	2.0	5	Black sapphire	36,690	15,495

DUE SOON

Year	Reg	Model	Eng	Dr	Colour	M/age	£
2007	07	Corsa Design Auto	1.4	3	Black sapphire	23,000	6,495
2006	06	Meriva Design CDTi	1.7D	5	Star silver	28,000	5,995
2007	57	Astra Sxi	1.6	5	Metro blue	13,075	6,695
2007	57	Astra Elite	1.8	5	Star silver	19,000	7,495
2008	08	Astra Breeze	1.4	5	Ultra blue	34,000	7,495

COMMERCIAL

Year	Reg	Model	Eng	Dr	Colour	M/age	£
2010	10	Combo CDTi	1.3	5	White	17,005	7,995
2010	10	Combo van	1.2	5	Glacier white	Delivery	8,995+VAT
2010	10	Astravan Sportive CDTi	1.7D	3	Sovereign silver	Delivery	10,995+VAT
2010	10	Vivaro LWB	2.0	5	Glacier white	7,350	11,995+VAT

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in white gold metallic with cream leather
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2000 VAUXHALL ZAFIRA COMFORT 1.6 16V 7 SEATER
in silver metallic with contrasting dark grey cloth
£2,995



2005/05 SAAB 9-3 LINEAR SPORT 150BHP DIESEL 4 DOOR
in metallic moondust grey with contrasting dark grey clothr
£5,995



2004/54 PLATE VW BEETLE TDI DIESEL 3 DOOR
in stardust metallic silver with contrasting black cloth
£5,995



2007/07 RENAULT SCENIC 1.6 AUTO VVTI DYNAMIQUE
in sandringham metallic with dark grey charcoal trim
£6,495



2006/06 VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.6 CLUB 5 DOOR HATCH
in panacotter silver metallic with contrasting dark grey cloth
£4,995



2005/05 PLATE PEUGEOT 407 DIESEL 2.0 HDI S 4 DOOR
ice blue metallic dark grey interior 6 speed gearbox
£4,495



2004/54 RENAULT GRAND ESPACE AUTO DIESEL INITIAL 7 SEATER
in nightfire blue metallic sand leather/suede
£8,995



2006/56 FIAT SEDICI ELEGANZA 1.9 DIESEL 5 DOOR
in metallic starbust red with black cloth
£5,995



2005/05 PLATE SAAB 9-3 1.8 4 DOOR SALOON
in sunburst red with contrasting black cloth interior air conditioning
£4,995



2003/53 RENAULT ESPACE 2.2 DIESEL INITIAL 7 SEATER
in majenta red metallic with contrasting sand leather/suede
£5,995



2001/51 RENAULT ESPACE THE RACE 7 SEATER
in stardust metallic silver with contrasting black cloth interior
£3,995



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W REG HONDA ACCORD 2.0 VTEC SE, 5 door, green metallic, a/c, e/s/roof, e/windows, stereo, CD, pas, ... **£1,495**

T REG CITROEN XANTIA 2.0 AUTO ESTATE, met blue, full black leather interior, air con, electric windows, pas, in car entertainment, mot & taxed **£1,295**

1999 (T) FORD FIESTA 1.25 GHIA, 5 door, in white, long mot, alloy wheels, power Steering **£995**

N REG FORD MONDEO LX 1.9 ESTATE, blue, power steering, e/w, stereo, central locking, s/roof, new mot & taxed **£695**

2000 (X) V W GOLF 1.6 SE, 5 door in racing green metallic, air conditioning, electric windows, remote control central locking, heated front seats, in car entertainment system **£1,995**

2001 DAEWOO MATIZ SE+ in brilliant orange metallic, pas, e/w, stereo/CD, alloy wheels, mot & taxed, very clean, lots of bills and good service history for only **£1,495**

1998 (R) FORD ESCORT 1.8 TD GHIA ESTATE, in metallic red with contrasting dark grey cloth interior, alloy wheels, ... **£995**

P REG/1997 MAZDA 323 1.5 LXI 5 DOOR IN METALLIC RED-ALLOY WHEELS-POWER STEERING-ELECTRIC WINDOWS-THIS CAR HAS A MOT AND IS TAXED **£895**

ALFA ROMEO

147, TS TURISMO, 2008, abs brakes air con alarm fitted alloys cd player central locking climate control drivers airbag electric windows front fog lights full service history immobiliser metallic paint power fold mirrors split folding rear seats sports seats trip computer curtain airbags remote central locking isofix child seat points remote audio controls heated door mirrors space saver spare wheel, red, 14500 miles, £6300, Ramsgate, 0844 856 4496 (TRADE)

159, 1.9 JTDM 16v LUSSO, 2008, abs brakes air conditioning alloy wheels cd player diesel electric windows immobiliser leather interior multiple airbags power steering trip computer remote central locking remote audio controls, alfa red, 70000 miles, £9000, Canterbury, 0844 856 4494 (TRADE)

159, 1.9 JTDM 16v LUSSO, 2008, abs brakes air conditioning alloy wheels cd player diesel electric windows immobiliser leather interior multiple airbags power steering trip computer remote central locking remote audio controls, alfa red, 70000 miles, £9000, Ramsgate, 0844 856 4496 (TRADE)

AUDI

A3, 2.0T FSI S LINE DSG, 2006, abs brakes alarm fitted alloys drivers airbag electric windows front fog lights immobiliser leather interior multiple airbags power steering sports seats traction control trip computer remote central locking isofix child seat points adjustable steering column body coloured bumpers heated door mirrors height adj drivers seat space saver spare wheel, grey, 84428 miles, £8750, Ashford, 0844 826 5918 (TRADE)

A3, Sport (Plus Motorparks Pack and Delivery), 2006, abs brakes alloy wheels drivers airbag electric windows immobiliser multiple airbags power steering single cd player remote central locking, blue, 35000 miles, £10000, Ashford, 0844 826 5918 (TRADE)

A6, Avant TDi Quattro SE automatic, gm03jkv, climate control, full leather, satellite navigation, remote central locking, power steering, abs, twin air bags, heated seats, colour coded body, metallic paintwork, rear wash/wipe, cd player, electric windows, electric mirrors, 16'' alloys, 4x4, green, 69000 miles, £7999, Maidstone, 01622 200 100 (TRADE)

BENTLEY

ARNAGE, 6.7 T Mulliner auto just 30000 miles, sn05dfk, air con, climate control, colour satnav, dual climate zones, full leather, memory seats, powered folding mirrors, privacy glass, remote alarm, remote central locking, electric seats, heated seats, rear headrests, cruise control, multi-function steering wheel, parking sensor, power steering, traction control, abs, multiple airbags, auto lighting, colour coded body, front fog lamps, headlamp jetwash, metallic paintwork, electric mirrors, electric windows, multi-disc cd player, radio, steering wheel audio controls, 19'' alloys, please ring for full details, always over 60 mercedes-benz cars in stock! we will not be beaten on price! fully fsA regulated, tungsten grey metallic, 30000 miles, £49995, Welling, 0208 8548037 (TRADE)

CHEVROLET

KALOS, 1.4 SX, 2007, abs brakes alarm fitted cd player central locking drivers airbag electric windows full service history immobiliser power steering twin airbags adjustable steering column, pearl black, 15782 miles, £5000, Canterbury, 0844 856 4494 (TRADE)

MATIZ, 1.0 FLAIR 5dr CHOICE OF 5, 2008, abs brakes air conditioning central locking electric windows full service history immobiliser metallic paint multiple airbags power steering trip computer quickclear windscreen body coloured bumpers, silver, 25661 miles, £3999, Ashford, 0844 826 5918 (TRADE)

TACUMA, 2.0 CDX Auto, 2007, abs brakes air con alloy wheels automatic transmission cd player immobiliser metallic paint multiple airbags power steering front passenger air bag deactivation switch remote central locking isofix child seat points, silver, 23000 miles, £3000, Ramsgate, 0844 856 4496 (TRADE)

DAEWOO

LACETTI, LEGANZA CDX AT, 2000, abs brakes air conditioning alarm fitted alloy wheels cd player central locking drivers airbag electric windows immobiliser metallic paint leather interior multiple airbags power steering single cd player tinted glass remote central locking adjustable steering column body coloured bumpers rear headrests height adj drivers seat, silver, 37934 miles, £3000, Ashford, 0844 826 5918 (TRADE)

MATIZ, SE Plus 5dr, 8370079, power steering, central locking, rear wash/wipe, electric front windows, twin air bags, cloth upholstery, radio cassette, alloys, this matiz is just one of 180 cars that we are currently offering for sale.all our vehicles are inspected in our workshop and are prepared to the highest standard. orange, 42700 miles, £1995, Plumstead, 020 8855 4000 (TRADE)

FIAT

500, 1.2 Lounge 3dr Hatch, lt09wfo, pas, abs, remote central locking, front electric windows, radio/cd, side airbags, electricdoor mirrors, drivers airbag, space saver spare wheel, isofix child seat anchor points, body coloured bumpers, height adjustable drivers seat, audio remote control, bossa nova white metallic, 2575 miles, £8995, Tunbridge Wells, 01892 549766 (TRADE)

BRAVO, 1.4 T-JET ACTIVE, 2007, abs brakes air conditioning cd player electric windows immobiliser metallic paint multiple airbags power steering split folding rear seats tonneau cover trip computer front passenger air bag deactivation switch remote central locking, black, 11179 miles, £7000, Ashford, 0844 826 5918 (TRADE)

DUCATO 33 MWB, 2010, abs brakes cd player central locking drivers airbag electric windows immobiliser, white, 13033 miles, £12000, Ashford, 0844 826 5918 (TRADE)

FIORINO, 1.3 Cargo, 2010, abs brakes drivers airbag multiple airbags power steering trip computer adjustable steering column, blue, 4000 miles, £6000, Ramsgate, 0844 856 4496 (TRADE)

GRANDE PUNTO, 2006, cd player electric windows immobiliser power steering tonneau cover trip computer twin airbags front passenger air bag deactivation switch remote central locking remote audio controls, rock n roll blue, 13000 miles, £5000, Ramsgate, 0844 856 4496 (TRADE)

IDEA, 1.4, 2008, black, 55 miles, £8000, Ramsgate, 0844 856 4496 (TRADE)

MULTIPLA, 2.0, 2008, abs brakes cd player central locking drivers airbag electric windows front fog lights heated seats immobiliser, blue, 55 miles, £15000, Ashford, 0844 826 5918 (TRADE)

PANDA, Dynamic, 2005, abs brakes cd player drivers airbag electric windows immobiliser power steering remote central locking, turquoise, 32527 miles, £4000, Ashford, 0844 826 5918 (TRADE)

HONDA

ACCORD, i-VTEC Executive, 2004, abs brakes alarm fitted alloy wheels central locking cruise control drivers airbag electric windows immobiliser multiple airbags power steering, silver, 75800 miles, £5000, Canterbury, 0844 856 4494 (TRADE)

CR-V, 2.0 i Vtec ES, 2007, abs brakes air conditioning alloy wheels cd player electric windows immobiliser metallic paint multiple airbags power steering front passenger air bag deactivation switch remote central locking isofix child seat points remote audio controls adjustable steering column 3x3 point rear seat belts height adj drivers seat, silver, 22000 miles, £13500, Ashford, 0844 826 5918 (TRADE)

FR-V, SE, 2005, abs brakes air conditioning cd player central locking full service history immobiliser power steering remote central locking, blue, 35202 miles, £8000, Ramsgate, 0844 856 4496 (TRADE)

KIA

PICANTO, 1.1 ICE, 2008, central locking electric windows immobiliser metallic paint power steering twin airbags remote central locking, ice blue, 7500 miles, £6000, Canterbury, 0844 856 4494 (TRADE)

SEDONA, CRDI TS, 2007, abs brakes air con alarm fitted alloys automatic cd player cruise control diesel electric windows front fog lights heated seats immobiliser metallic paint leather interior multiple airbags power steering reverse parking aid traction control trip computer remote central locking isofix child seat points remote audio controls, black metallic, 17000 miles, £12500, Ashford, 0844 826 5918 (TRADE)

SORENTO, 2.5 CRD XS, 2006, 4x4 abs brakes air con alarm fitted alloy wheels cd player central locking diesel drivers airbag electric windows front fog lights immobiliser metallic paint leather interior multiple airbags power steering tinted glass tonneau cover trip computer remote central locking remote audio controls body coloured bumpers rear headrests heated door mirrors height adj drivers seat, black and silver, 41458 miles, £11000, Ashford, 0844 826 5918 (TRADE)

LOTUS

ELISE, S TOURING, 2009, abs brakes alarm fitted alloy wheels central locking electric windows immobiliser leather interior, red, 6000 miles, £21000, Canterbury, 0844 856 4494 (TRADE)

EVORA, 3.5 V6 SPORT PACK - SPORTS RAT, 2010, abs brakes alloy wheels cd player electric windows immobiliser power steering sports seats xenon headlamps remote central locking, ardent red, 900 miles, £47000, Canterbury, 0844 856 4494 (TRADE)

EXIGE, 1.8 S PERFORMANCE - SPORTS TOURING, 2009, abs brakes alloys cd player electric windows immobiliser power steering sports seats remote central locking, lifestyle aspen white, 6312 miles, £30000, Canterbury, 0844 856 4494 (TRADE)

MINI

COOPER, 1.6 S, 2004, abs brakes alloy wheels cd player electric windows front fog lights immobiliser metallic paint power steering remote central locking, hyper blue, 34443 miles, £8000, Canterbury, 0844 856 4494 (TRADE)

COOPER, 1.6 D CLUBMAN, 2009, black, 60800 miles, £11995, Canterbury, 0844 856 4494 (TRADE)

COOPER S, 1.6 convertible, 2005, blue metallic with black half leather sport seats, 46000 miles, £7985, Kent, 01795426700 (TRADE)

COOPER S, Mini Cooper S Convertible full leather trim, af06dwo, air conditioning, full leather, xenon headlamps, remote alarm, remote central locking, parking sensor, power steering, traction control, abs, multiple airbags, colour coded body, front fog lamps, headlamp jetwash, electric mirrors, electric windows, power hood, cd player, radio, 17'' alloys, full black leather, always over 60 mercedes-benz cars in stock! we will not be beaten on price! fully fsA regulated, chili red, 48000 miles, £9995, Welling, 0208 8548037 (TRADE)

NISSAN

370Z, BLACK EDITION, 2010, abs brakes air conditioning alloy wheels bluetooth car kit cd player central locking electric windows power steering, black, 2904 miles, £28500, Canterbury, 0844 856 4494 (TRADE)

CUBE, CVT, 2010, abs brakes air conditioning alloy wheels cd player central locking electric windows power steering, sapphire black, 1497 miles, £11000, Canterbury, 0844 856 4494 (TRADE)

NOTE, N-TEC, 2009, abs brakes air conditioning alloy wheels bluetooth car kit cd player central locking diesel electric windows power steering, black, 7556 miles, £11000, Canterbury, 0844 856 4494 (TRADE)

PATHFINDER, 2010, abs brakes air conditioning alloy wheels automatic transmission bluetooth car kit cd player central locking diesel electric windows power steering, grey, 4000 miles, £32300, Ramsgate, 0844 856 4496 (TRADE)

PIXO, N-TEC, 2010, abs brakes air con alloys cd player central locking electric windows power steering, shell white, 50 miles, £6500, Ramsgate, 0844 856 4496 (TRADE)

QASHQAI, N-TEC, 2009, abs brakes air conditioning alloy wheels bluetooth car kit cd player central locking electric windows power steering, blade silver, 9718 miles, £15500, Canterbury, 0844 856 4494 (TRADE)

RENAULT

CLIO, 1.2 CAMPUS, 2007, abs brakes drivers airbag electric windows immobiliser power steering trip computer remote central locking isofix child seat points remote audio controls adjustable steering column body coloured bumpers 3x3 point rear seat belts height adj drivers seat, blue, 23000 miles, £4250, Ashford, 0844 826 5918 (TRADE)

ESPACE, 3.00, 2008, abs brakes air conditioning alarm fitted alloy wheels central locking climate control cruise control diesel drivers airbag electric windows half leather trim heated seats immobiliser metallic paint power fold mirrors leather interior multiple airbags power steering satellite navigation single cd player xenon headlamps, black, 55 miles, £28000, Ashford, 0844 826 5918 (TRADE)

GRAND MODUS, 2009, abs brakes cd player central locking electric windows power steering, illusion stone, 12450 miles, £7600, Ashford, 0844 826 5918 (TRADE)

KOLEOS, 2.0 dCi DYNAMIQUE, 2009, air conditioning alarm fitted alloy wheels cd player electric windows front fog lights immobiliser multiple airbags power steering split folding rear seats trip computer remote central locking isofix child seat points roof bars adjustable steering column front armrest body coloured bumpers rear armrest 3x3 point rear seat belts heated door mirrors height adj drivers seat, metallic slate grey, 18635 miles, £12495, Ramsgate, 0844 856 4496 (TRADE)

LAGUNA, dCi 150 TomTom Edition, 2010, abs brakes alloy wheels cd player central locking drivers airbag electric windows immobiliser multiple airbags power steering satellite navigation, silver, 1702 miles, £17000, Ramsgate, 0844 856 4496 (TRADE)

MEGANE, dCi Dynamique, 2007, abs brakes air conditioning alarm fitted alloy wheels cd player central locking drivers airbag electric windows immobiliser multiple airbags power steering, grey, 54520 miles, £5000, Ashford, 0844 826 5918 (TRADE)

New Megane, 2010, abs brakes air conditioning alloy wheels bluetooth car kit drivers airbag electric windows immobiliser multiple airbags power steering reverse parking aid single cd player remote central locking, various, 10 miles, £12995, Canterbury, 0844 856 4494 (TRADE)

SCENIC, Dynamique, 2002, alloy wheels central locking drivers airbag electric windows immobiliser multiple airbags power steering, red, 84000 miles, £2300, Canterbury, 0844 856 4494 (TRADE)

TWINGO, 1.2, 2008, red, 54 miles, £26100, Ashford, 0844 826 5918 (TRADE)

TWINGO, Dynamique, 2008, abs brakes alloy wheels drivers airbag electric windows front fog lights immobiliser multiple airbags power steering single cd player remote central locking isofix child seat points, black, 44696 miles, £5000, Ramsgate, 0844 856 4496 (TRADE)

SAAB

9-3, TiD Vector, 2007, abs brakes air conditioning alarm fitted alloy wheels cd player central locking climate control cruise control drivers airbag electric windows immobiliser leather interior multiple airbags power steering, black, 93657 miles, £7000, Ramsgate, 0844 856 4496 (TRADE)

9-3, 1.8 LINEAR, 2004, abs brakes air conditioning alloy wheels automatic transmission electric windows immobiliser metallic paint power steering traction control remote central locking, black, 56500 miles, £7500, Ramsgate, 0844 856 4496 (TRADE)

9-5, 2.2 TiD LINEAR, 2005, alloy wheels cd player diesel electric windows immobiliser metallic paint power steering remote central locking remote audio controls, silver, 107000 miles, £5000, Canterbury, 0844 856 4494 (TRADE)

9-5, Airflow, 8055079, air con, dual climate zones, remote alarm, remote central locking, cloth upholstery, head restraints, height adjustable seat, centre armrest, rear headrests, adjustable steering column, power steering, traction control, abs, twin air bags, colour coded body, electric windows, electric mirrors, radio, cd player, alloy wheels, this 9-5 is just one of over 180 quality vehicles which we are currently offering for sale. please click on the link to our web site to view our current stock. all our vehicles are inspected in our workshop and are prepared to the highest standard. grey, 30800 miles, £8995, Plumstead, 020 8855 4000 (TRADE)

SUBARU

IMPREZA, 2.0 Wrx Turbo Awd, y785nwl, twin air bags, abs, power steering, adjustable steering column, air conditioning, electric mirrors, electric windows, remote central locking, immobiliser, colour coded body, cd, stereo, metallic paintwork, cloth upholstery, height adjustable seat, sports seats, rear headrests, alloy wheels, 4x4, full pre-delivery inspection, full safety check, free 6 months fully comprehensive warranty, 12 months mot, free 7 days fully comprehensive insurance, aluminium silver, 75000 miles, £4995, Maidstone, 01622 842299 (TRADE)

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INSIDE THIS WEEK



IT'S customary to be optimistic about the New Year, but stories inside underpin our lead item that 2011 could be the year Kent business turns the corner. There was a sense in 2010 that, after the roller-coaster of the pre-recession years, firms applied the brakes sensibly rather than skidding to a stop. We're not out of the gloom yet, but there is a glimmer…

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Optimism takes steady grip on Kent commerce

By **STEVE LOADER**
steve.loader@kosmedia.co.uk

NEW Year optimism has caught hold of Kent businesses after a year that will be seen aa one of consolidation and cautious growth after the recession.

But most acknowledged it would not be easy as they looked ahead to 2011. Many firms heeded frequently heard advice not to be panicked into job cuts and risk struggling to take advantage of the upturn and, perhaps most fundamental of all, to cut costs and chase invoices.

Jo James, chief executive of Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce, told Business Week that the latter was now paramount: "We now know we have a very difficult time ahead, and we are going to have to be extremely innovative and frugal to overcome problems presented.

"At the beginning of 2010 it appeared that while the worst was over, it was obvious that in the long term stringent economic measures were going to be needed to restore economic equilibrium.

"A looming General Election meant that there was no clear indication of what those measures might be, or how we would be affected.

"The most significant impact on all businesses in 2010 was the change of government and the changes that came along with it, changes that we could ill afford at a time of a very fragile economy; cuts and tax increases – both of which have yet to reveal their true impact.

"Throughout the second half of the year, forecasts from various sources have ranged from pessimism to optimism, but overall the message is the same – austerity is the only route back to prosperity. We can do it. In life there is always something you can do to economise – waste a little less food, turn the heating down a bit.



RICHARD PHILLIPS: Coasting back

"Business is the same. Efficiency is the name of game. It is the only way to survive and hold on until things improve. If there is one sentence to keep at the forefront of our minds for 2011 it is: 'All challenges and changes, no matter how severe, bring opportunities'."

Janet Goode, partner and notary public with Maidstone-based solicitors Whitehead Monckton, was also cautious yet positive and predicted a swing to new financing: "This time last year our corporate team was expecting to be facing more insolvency work and fewer corporate deals and for a while in the early months of 2010 that seemed likely. How pleased we were to find that from mid-February onwards the deals started to roll in, slowly at first, but gathering momentum through the year. Based on that, I am going to predict an upturn in business activity in Kent in 2011.



JANET GOODE

"However, I think we will be surprised by a shift in financing options. I think we will see more deals being funded privately and an emergence of new Business Angels, who, properly co-ordinated, could present a real challenge to traditional lending sources. Let's hope the Angels are Kent-based, too."



JOHN FOWLER

Not unnaturally, this chimed with Kent Savers' chief officer John Fowler whose Gravesend-based credit union/co-operative pitches itself as a more realistic means of businesses financing new ventures: "Banks have become increasingly difficult to obtain loans from and the interest rate they offer is often derisory and offers little in the way of incentive to save.

"In 2011 the financial realities will affect everyone in Kent, especially those – and there are lots – who want to save. The rates of interest available to them are still troublingly low and show no signs of increasing significantly.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 75

'Outrageous' tax will hit economy claims rural business watchdog

THE Country Land and Business Association (CLA) says the Government's "outrageous" decision not to extend business rates relief on empty business properties will hit the rural economy hard and could encourage demolition rather than investment.

The rural watchdog, which has 35,000 members, said small to medium-sized businesses in the rural sector made a crucial contribution to the UK economy and claimed the Government was unjustified in making landlords pay tax on all empty properties with a rateable value of more than £2,600.

Currently, rates are only payable where the rateable value exceeds £18,000 on any empty property.

CLA regional director Rupert Ashby said: "This is an outrageous tax from the Government. Applying non-domestic rates to empty property is a disincentive to investment for providing and improving rural business premises to let.



"It is more likely to encourage demolition and other actions to make buildings unusable to avoid this unjustifiable tax.

"We must not forget the supply of rural business space is essential for a business-led economic recovery.

"Penalising landlords in this way is counterproductive.

"We would also like to see empty property relief from business rates extended indefinitely to all business premises where broadband is not available.

"Rural business premises without broadband do not attract tenants."

Comment

NO self-respecting Kent company will say they have anything less than a strategic plan measured out in several years.

The reality in this long drawn-out post-recession period though is that most firms will have been existing on a year-by-year and even month-by-month basis.

Nevertheless, the UK economy was on course to exceed modest Government forecasts for growth in 2010, despite uncertainty caused by the May general election and the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review in October.

Unfortunately, we can expect recent extreme weather – and the promise of more in the next few months – to interrupt the steady upturn and there is also the more obvious hurdle presented by VAT being hiked 2.5 per cent this week to an unprecedented 20 per cent.

However, the feedback we are getting at Business Week is that the Kent business community is leaner and fitter and well-placed to persevere in 2011.

Money will be tight; the banks are still tough on borrowing – a stance that could not contrast more with the carefree days before the 2007 crash.

Firms know the value of money far more now though and commentators in the legal and accountancy sectors speak of a viable alternative – a willingness for enlightened and cash-rich individuals to invest in well-run firms because they are confident of a better return on their investment than currently offered by bank interest rates.

Meanwhile, there is the stirring of a new force in the banking sector; this year saw the beginning of a re-organisation at the former Kent Reliance Building Society, which could see it become the vehicle for a new bank to rival established High Street names.

A Continental-style credit union/operative Kent Savers (see our main story this week) has also become a player in Kent, while the Tonbridge-based Charity Bank continues to win awards and accolades.

The growth of IT and web-based expertise in the county is also meeting a desire for companies to cut overheads and become faster and fitter for the upturn.

Halfords rebrands Kent garages

FOUR garages in Kent are the latest to get a makeover as part of a £73 million investment by Halfords.

The improved sites in Ashford, Canterbury, Dover and Maidstone have also been rebranded as Halfords Autocentres.

The car parts retailer entered the garage sector by acquiring the 253-site Nationwide Autocentre car service, repair and MoT chain last year.

The old green and white Nationwide branding has given way to Halfords' orange and black livery and the new-look business claims to derive 25 per cent of its revenue from the company sector – the rest from private customers.

Maidstone manager John Relf said: "Halfords Autocentre is good news for the company and drivers in the county. Our garage is equipped with the latest technology which means we can service all makes and models of car, old and new."

He also claimed his firm could offer dealership quality and service at more affordable prices and that suppliers would benefit from locally-sourced parts.

The hidden impact is often emotional

BUSINESS owners often dream of the day they can sell up and enjoy the wealth they have created.



By **MARGARET CONNOLLY**
of Reeves and Co

Their plans could include buying a yacht, a supercar, a bigger house, or a round-the-world cruise, but ask someone who has sold their business already and the reality can be different.

Selling a business can be complicated: the method of the sale (be it MBO, MBI, trade sale), amount of consideration (are you getting good value?), and finding the right buyer.

Even when you think you've found a taker, you will be answering query after query from your advising solicitors, tax advisers, accountants and any other professional adviser.

And don't underestimate the emotional impact. We have noticed that this is often ignored until it is perhaps a tad too late. Consideration of the effect is never too early, both for entrepreneurs and long-term business owners. Even if your exit strategy has always been clear in your mind and you feel prepared to hand over the running of your business, the emotional effects may only be felt after the sale.

On one occasion, an owner realised on the day of the sale he'd have nothing to get up for the next day and thought about pulling out on that basis.

Whether you like it or not, your business has probably become inextricably part of who you are. You may have built it from scratch and watched it grow into a dynamic and efficient organisation – like building a family. To extend the metaphor, selling your business may be similar to watching the children leave home.

Emotions are rarely considered in business, but don't underestimate them. So how can one prepare for the impact of selling your business?

- A clear exit strategy should be in place long before you decide to sell. Succession planning should also be considered, arguably when you start your business. Leaving your business to a family member may lessen the emotional tear, but you may still find it hard to let go.
- Discuss the sale with those closest to you. Is your business part of who you are? Can you imagine yourself not being involved with the running of the business? Friends and family will be able to help answer these questions.
- Be clear what you are going to do post-sale. How are you going to use the money realised? Is this business your pension, or are you aiming for bigger and better opportunities in your career?

While selling up could be your big chance to realise significant personal wealth, this should not be allowed to cloud your judgement; you have put your heart and soul into the business, so it will be worth more than just a number or a pile of money in the bank.

The moment of selling your business is often one that you are not equipped to deal with and requires more thought than you might expect.

So if you are thinking about selling your business at some point, talk to your advisers or nearest and dearest. The more prepared you are, the smoother and easier the transition will be from full-time entrepreneur or business owner to becoming someone else.

• Margaret Connolly is tax partner at Reeves and Co.





To view this clip, log on @ www.businessforkent.co.uk



Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce chief Jo James speaks to Julie Maddocks

BUSINESS WEEK

online: www.businessforkent.co.uk

SOUTH Thanet MP Laura Sandys has applauded a Government move intended to safeguard Thanet's English language schools – seen as the isle's second most important economic sector.

Students wanting to learn English will not now need to meet a minimum proficiency to study for up to 11 months.

The Tory MP said: "Language students are a hugely important part of Thanet's economy. They spend in our shops and restaurants and bring income throughout the year. This is a real win for everyone in Thanet. While we need to regulate our borders, immigration controls should be proportionate, targeted and effective. I am pleased the system will now focus on targeting those who might abuse education providers for visas while also providing a user-friendly system for bona fide students and reputable education institutions."

ENVIRONMENTALLY savvy small Kent construction firms may soon benefit from the Government's Green Deal announcement, designed to drive energy-efficient modernisation of 26 million homes across the UK. A government-sponsored survey showed that 66 per cent of homeowners favoured an SME (small to medium enterprise) contractor to work on their home if they could offer low-carbon solutions, as opposed to one unable to do so. And 57 per cent of homeowners said they were keen to undertake work to improve the energy efficiency of their home.

SALES of new homes at Kings Hill – the business/residential new town near West Malling – doubled year-on-year during November.

Housebuilders Bellway Homes, Hillreed Homes and Environ Communities recorded 11 sales between them during the month, maintaining an upward trend since the summer and further signalling recovering economic strength in the area.

The developers argue that this also shows increasing determination by people to buy homes now, possibly due to predictions that the availability of finance is not expected to ease next year.

SWALE Heating has introduced software to provide customers with a faster, more efficient and secure payment service. The PayCentre package automates all payment instructions and transactions and is also Direct Debit and BACS compliant.

Swale Heating's Kevin Thomas said: "We provide heating support to more than 100,000 private and commercial clients across Kent, London and Sussex. Many customers prefer to use Direct Debit, therefore it's vital we offer an optimum accounts service that is secure and efficient."

Sittingbourne-based Swale Heating was established in 1972 and has a workforce of 419.

CANTERBURY Christ Church University's Medway campus has organised another Medway Business Forum. Build Your Own Marketing Plan is on Wednesday, January 26, and will include experts from the university and industry. They will offer businesses the chance to create and develop a marketing plan. Tara Humphrey, the university's business development manager for the Medway campus, said: "Understanding how to market your business, and who to, can improve outcomes in any area of your business. But planning in areas such as marketing, where resources can be limited, can not only be very costly, but could also harm your reputation if you get it wrong."

Email tara.humphrey@canterbury.ac.uk or call 01227 782672 to book.

New year of opportunity

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 73

"Because we are a mutual organisation, we work on behalf of local people. Our costs are very low and we are looking to provide a dividend to savers which will be really beneficial to them while their savings are being used just to benefit those local people who need loans."

Terry Hewett, MD of Medway-based PR agency Zest also couldn't resist a sideswipe at the banks in an otherwise upbeat summary for 2011: "We have seen similar painful episodes in our business life caused by a multitude of different conditions, although I never expected one to be caused by the very institution that is supposed to be stable and above reproach.

"So what about 2011? I'm touching wood when I say this, but it's looking pretty good at the moment. The commercial sector is ready to grow again and we are seeing a lot of interest from our new business efforts, with exciting business wins and new client meetings are certainly on the up."

His top tips for the New Year:

- Learn by experience.
- Be creative.
- Don't ignore new technologies or media.
- Understand the market you operate in.
- Maximise your potential.
- Maintain a presence in the market, even in tough times.

Nigel Burnett, senior partner at the CooperBurnett law firm Tunbridge Wells, was more even-handed in his summary: "2010 proved to be a stronger year than many of us would have expected, particularly for businesses which provide a genuine service. Concerns for next year centre on the economy and whether or not the framework provided by government and the Bank of England will actually be supportive of business or will inhibit it. We think there is some confusion within



TERRY HEWETT

Government – reducing corporation tax rates may well be encouraging to British and foreign companies alike, but substantial rates of personal tax which apply to individuals, partnerships and LLPs [limited liability partnerships] is undoubtedly inhibiting, and seems not to have been understood within Government, perhaps for politically motivated reasons.

"We would like to see an enterprise culture more akin to the US model, where in difficult times advantages are given to businesses, rather than the traditional model where advantages are only



NIGEL BURNETT

provided by way of a relaxation of the reins on the way out of recession. Subject to that, our view is that our clients' appetite for business is strong and provided there is enough money in the system to enable them to conduct the business that they wish to pursue, they will do so."

There are also signs that confidence is returning to sectors of business that come under the heading of 'nice to have' rather than 'must have', with garden designer Jo Thompson, telling us her eponymous firm enjoyed a "fabulous year" with awards Chelsea Flower Show and financial benefits from projects in Europe and South Africa as well as the UK, though she added: "Kent is definitely where it's happening. 2011 is going to be a year for building on this, and certainly not for resting on any laurels (excuse the pun)."

Her top tips for 2011 were:

- Have a clear idea of the brand.
- Have a fabulous website: it doesn't need to be all-singing, all-dancing. Just clear and concise and reflecting what you do.
- Maintain relationships with customers after you've completed the job.

And the restaurant trade can also be considered a luxury in hard times, but Kent-based chef and restaurateur Richard Phillips said: "2010 has been a challenging year but one which we planned for as much as possible. As a restaurateur we have had the



JO THOMPSON

added adverse weather in January and December to deal with. So finding ways to ensure people knew our restaurants were open even through the worst of the weather was essential.

"2011 is hard to predict but this year has seen a much stronger position for British business than expected and I am hoping we can take the positive aspects of this forward."

His top tips:

- Plan for the unexpected.
- Have a plan B.
- Whatever you do, learn your trade.
- Network. You never know what opportunities a contact can offer.
- If you are passionate about your business that is half the recipe for success. The other 50 per cent is hard work, expertise and luck.





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Kent Business School

Science Park plays host to French media

KENT Science Park at Sittingbourne hosted 15 French journalists as part of a two-day trip organised by Invest Thames Gateway.

The visit was designed to enhance the region's profile throughout the EU and highlight its attraction as a location for European businesses.

The delegation heard from business owners based at the park and met representatives from development agencies Locate in Kent, Seeda and Invest Thames Gateway.

Paul Cowham, MD of Park-based Sota Solutions, talked to the journalists about the major contract the company has won delivering high-speed connectivity to the onsite substation for the London Array wind farm.

Testing

There was also a presentation on behalf of DGL Testing Services, which is carrying out the testing of bituminous materials in the roads in and around the Olympic Stadium and the main running track.

Park director James Speck said: "We were delighted that the delegation got the chance to see examples of the work that goes on at Kent Science Park. This area is uniquely suited as a location for European businesses and Sota and DGL are great examples of the success that can come from being involved in projects such as the 2012 Olympics and the London Array wind farm that are transforming the economic landscape in the Thames Gateway."

Save energy, save cash

NEW ways of saving energy could help Kent County Council, businesses and local people save money, according to an in-depth council report, ***writes business editor Steve Loader***.

The three-month investigation by County Hall's select committee on renewable energy recommended:

- Reviewing energy use in county council buildings to see if they can be adapted for new technologies.
- Helping schools, businesses and residents to access loan funds such as the Green Investment Bank for energy projects.
- Providing small grants of up to £5,000 for low-carbon community groups.
- Encouraging apprenticeships for young people to enter Kent's coppicing industry.
- Providing schools with a package of energy advice and support.
- Investing in sustainable production of wood fuel from coppicing.
- Investigating a network of public electric car charging points in Kent.

The committee also warned the county council it could be hit by financial penalties if it fails to take effective action to reduce carbon emissions.

Committee chairman Cllr Keith Ferrin said: "In 2009 KCC spent just under £24 million on buying energy. It is clear to us that this figure could be reduced substantially over the next few years by adopting a judicious mix of improvements in energy efficiency, and the exploitation of the subsidies available for the use of renewable energy."

KCC's cabinet member for environment, highways and waste, Cllr Nick Chard, said: "Using energy costs us a lot of money. We need to reduce our fuel bill – just like everyone does at home. The select committee has done a good job of highlighting some of the things we might do.

"It's a good starting point and has given us plenty to think about for future action."

Paul sets a new course away from the college

MARITIME expert Paul Russell left North West Kent College at Christmas after 25 years' service, guiding and managing maritime education and training at the National Sea Training Centre (NSTC) in Gravesend.

He joined the international institution at a critical time, when the British Merchant Navy had decided it no longer wanted to take on young men as ratings, which left the NSTC with a large purpose-built premises on the Denton marshes. Originally run by the National Sea Training Trust charity, its future seemed uncertain.

However, it was felt nautical training ought to continue at Gravesend and the NSTC became part of North West Kent College, where it is also now known as the Maritime Operations and Logistics Centre.

Mr Russell had worked for Cunard shipping services on all types of ships and marine propulsion systems and all over the world. He became head of the NSTC in 1996.

Editor

Brought up in Ashford, where his father worked as an engineer for British Railways in the Sealink shipping division, Mr Russell went to South Kent College before gaining a cadetship at Cunard. He has lived on the Isle of Grain for many years with his wife and three children, one of whom is studying electronic engineering at North West Kent College.

Mr Russell is now taking over as editor of technical journal Marine Propulsion and Auxiliary Machinery.



PAUL RUSSELL: New horizons beckon

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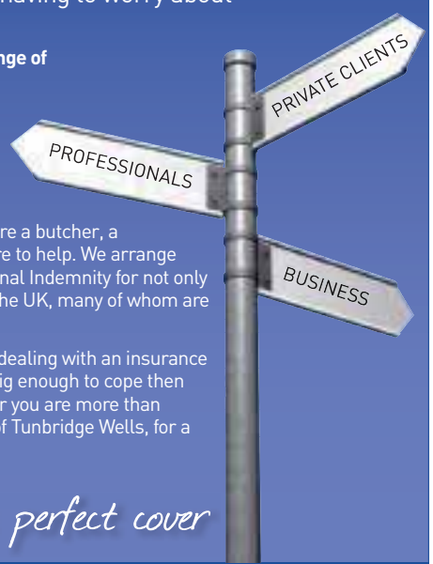
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Used car sales accelerate

SALES of used cars – an important economic barometer – rose during the third quarter of last year.

The 1,801,258 deals during July, August and September, 2010, represented a four per cent increase on Q3 2009 and 1.1 per cent against Q2 2010 – both results being the best outcomes since the pre-recession results of Q1 2006.

Kent dealers will have benefited particularly since the South East was the UK's star performer for this sector of the market, accounting for 382,697 cars sold and representing a 8.4 per cent increase against Q3 2009. The supermini, MPV and 4x4 categories led the market increases according to a survey by information services company Experian.

Spokesman Joe Myers said: "Q3 is historically a slow period for used cars sales, which makes this improvement in sales volumes very positive news."

Not surprisingly in economically straitened times, the luxury car segment and the upper medium car segment – the so-called Ford Mondo sector – bucked the upward trend.

Other key findings were:

- Ford remains the top-selling make with 14 per cent (260,067) of all used cars sales during Q3.
- The Vauxhall Corsa supermini was the best-selling model.
- Mercedes Benz saw the biggest improvement in used sales with a rise of 14.3 per cent year-on-year.
- Sales of electric and hybrid models continued to increase, rising by 36.7 per cent and 46 per cent respectively – admittedly from a low base.
- Diesel may dominate new car sales, but petrol cars still dominate the used market, accounting for 72.2 per cent of sales.

Mazda's company fleet foothold

MAZDA UK – the Dartford-based distributor for the Japanese car brand – has made major inroads into the company car market over the past year, writes Steve Loader.

Sales to leading contract hire and leasing companies jumped 20.9 per cent in 2010, a gain significantly above that of several other major brands targeting the sector, including Audi, Citroen, Fiat, Ford, Honda, Jaguar, Vauxhall and VW.

The latest growth is all the more impressive since the brand was struggling less than 10 years ago. It was well known for its MX-5 sports car – now in its third generation – but unable to make headway with its mainstream models.



Popular

That changed in 2002 with the advent of the Ford Mondeo class Mazda6 (pictured right), which was an immediate hit with company drivers. The second generation hatchback and estate versions are now driving the marque's company car success.

Leasing demand for the Mazda2 supermini and Mazda3 family hatchback models have also powered ahead to help make Mazda number 12 out of 36 brands supplying Britain's top leasing providers, as well as popular with private buyers.

Mazda fleet and remarketing director Peter Allibon said: "The analysis shows Mazda is closing the gap on some of the UK's most popular company car providers as some brands have seen their market share slip in 2010.

"Not only that, but among key rivals the Mazda6 is gaining momentum as demand for the Vauxhall Insignia, VW Passat and Ford Mondeo has fallen in 2010, according to the leasing company data."

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Sports Review 2010

Picture: REX FEATURES



LUCKY: Mike Conway survived a 200mph crash at the Indy 500

We take a look back at a hectic year of thrills and spills for our Kent clubs and sports stars

Picture: ADY KERRY



BIG FREEZE: Snow covered Priestfield

JANUARY

HEAVY snow and freezing temperatures wiped out the entire county's sports fixtures for a second weekend in the New Year.

Several inches of snow fell in Kent throughout the week, which left clubs in limbo and rendered fixture lists redundant.

Gillingham's League One clash against Tranmere Rovers at Priestfield was called off early in the week, while none of the games involving Kent's non-league sides went ahead.

Likewise all rugby fixtures were postponed, along with the Kent County Cross Country Championships held at Detling Showground, near Maidstone. Even the indoor hockey schedule was hit by the unfamiliar conditions, with England Hockey deciding to reschedule all fixtures nationwide.

FORMER Maidstone United defender Chris Smalling agreed to join Premier League champions Manchester United in a shock £8 million transfer.

The 20-year-old central defender from Chatham, who came through the youth ranks at Ryman Premier club Maidstone before joining Fulham in 2008, was the subject of intense transfer speculation.

Despite an offer from Arsenal, he decided to join Sir Alex Ferguson's side and completed the move in the summer. Maidstone revealed they were not expecting to profit from the transfer move.

Stones chairman, Paul Bowdon-Brown, said: "There is no compensation agreement, but we are to receive a nominal fee once he has made 10 Premier League appearances. I'm not expecting to receive anything else, this was the agreement agreed when Fulham signed him."

Smalling has since made 11 appearances for United and earned a call-up to the England squad for the friendly against France in November.

FEBRUARY

GRAVESEND rugby player Clarence Harding was left blinded in one eye following an eye-gouge in a Kent Cup game against Maidstone.

The incident, which took place in a game at The Mote on January 17, was eventually proved as a deliberate eye-gouge, but at the time Maidstone refused to confirm or deny whether the player accused had been suspended.

An RFU spokesman said: "No-one would have told them (Maidstone) what to do. What they do is up to them. There is no common practice for this sort of situation, they are dealt with on a case-by-case basis."

A long investigation involving police and the RFU followed with the former unable to prove if the incident was deliberate. The RFU cleared player Matt Iles, but deemed a deliberate eye-gouge by a Maidstone player took place. The club have been charged with failure to fully investigate the incident and they will discover if any sanctions will be imposed at a hearing in January.

BOBSLEDDER Kelly Thomas finished 11th on her Winter Olympic debut at the Vancouver Games.

The brakeman from Dartford was part of the Great Britain 2 squad taking part in the two-man bobsleigh competition held at Whistler.

The 29-year-old, partnered by Paula Walker, began the competition with a crash in practice, but they escaped injury and progressed into the final, where they finished 11th.

Thomas, who only took up bobsledding three years ago after switching from sprinting, was delighted with the result, which saw the pair finish 0.05 seconds adrift of the top 10.



SLEIGH BELLE: Kelly Thomas (back) finished 11th in the two-man bobsleigh Picture: GETTY IMAGES

She said: "When we hit the Olympic target set by the British Olympic Association, we were overjoyed; just getting there was against all the odds. Now having completed all four runs we can finally relax and enjoy the Olympic experience."

MARCH



GEAR CHANGE: Ben 'The Stig' Collins joined touring car team Motorbase Performance

BRITISH Touring Car team Motorbase Performance opened talks with Ben Collins who was unveiled as BBC Top Gear's 'The Stig' later in the year.

The Wrotham-based team's entry in the championship looked in doubt as acquiring both sponsorship and drivers proved to be a struggle. In their search for racers they gave a test drive to sports car ace and Top Gear star Collins, who impressed team owner David Bartrum.

He said: "We are talking to everyone we can. We can't sort out the driver line-up until we have secured funding and it's really difficult to find backers. Ben has been helping us over the winter and has been really good for us. He is someone we are considering."

Motorbase eventually captured Collins for a three-pronged attack on the final round of the series at Brands Hatch on October 2. The team finished runner-up in the Independent Teams' title race, marking their best ever season in the championship.

KENT chairman George Kennedy said lessons needed to be learned after the club announced an £802,452 deficit.

The results for the year to October 31, 2009, produced a deficit increase of £110,730 compared to the previous year. One of the most disappointing results from the figures was a £190,000 loss from summer concerts held at the St Lawrence Ground the previous year.

After experiencing losses from the Sugababes and James Morrison concerts held over a wekend, Kennedy assured members risks on similar ventures would not be taken again.

He said: "Maybe in the future we would do them again but certainly not this summer. We are in a period of stability and we need absolute certainty and we won't be taking chances on anything – that's for sure."

APRIL

OLYMPIC track cycling champion Jamie Staff announced his retirement after a highly successful career in the sport.

Picture: BRITISH CYCLING



RETIREMENT: Jamie Staff

The Ashford man said a combination of a back injury, his age and the talented next generation of young riders was the reason for calling time on his glittering career.

Staff began his cycling career riding BMX bikes at Folkestone Flyers BMX Club as a teenager and he eventually moved to America, where he became world champion at the age of 23 in 1996. The 37-year-old made the switch to track cycling in 2002 where he excelled in the discipline. Three world titles and several medals at major championships followed, but his greatest achievement came in Beijing in 2008 when he won Olympic gold in the team sprint.

He said: "It's been an amazing career and I managed to achieve all of my goals. I think even if I went back 10 years and someone told me I would become Olympic champion I wouldn't have believed them."

Staff returned to America to become team director of the USA Sprint squad in July.

THE NEWLY-refurbished Medway Park played host to a round of the Modern Pentathlon World Cup.

The £11 million state-of-the-art facility in Gillingham, which was only completed in March, welcomed the world's best pentathlon stars for a four-day competition.

Hungary's Adam Morosi won the men's event while France's Amelie Caze took the honours in the women's competition.

Jan Bartu, Pentathlon GB's performance director, said: "I'd like to say the organisation has been immaculate and has been recognised by all the international athletes and coaches. In a way I think it actually superseded last year's Crystal Palace World Championships.

"I was approached by a number of colleagues from other countries, who were very complimentary. They were actually saying this is like an Olympic set-up."

MAY

GILLINGHAM suffered relegation to League Two on the final day of the season, which proved to be the final straw as Mark Stimson was sacked following the side's 3-0 defeat at Wycombe Wanderers.

The Gills only needed a point to avoid relegation from their final game of the season, but the defeat, combined with a victory for Exeter and a draw between Hartlepool and Brentford consigned the Medway club to the drop.



DESPAIR: Gillingham were relegated into League Two Picture: ADY KERRY

After experiencing two relegations and a promotion during his three seasons at Priestfield, Gillingham chairman Paul Scally made the decision to sack Stimson the Monday after the Wycombe defeat.

Stimson said: "It's my team, my players, with one or two who are still on contracts from the old squad. It hurts a lot more because I thought we had enough about us this year."

A number of names were linked to the vacant managerial post, but former Dover Athletic manager and Gills legend Andy Hessenthaler was appointed Stimson's successor.

INDYCAR driver Mike Conway made a miraculous escape from an horrific 220mph shunt at the prestigious Indy 500 (see main picture).

The 27-year-old from Sevenoaks was enjoying his second appearance at the famous race at Indianapolis Motor Speedway in America when disaster struck. Heading into the final lap he tangled wheels with Ryan Hunter Reay and his car pitched into the air before it smashed into the circuit's perimeter fencing, leaving only the cockpit intact.

Luckily he managed to escape the crash with only fractures to his leg and back after checking in to a nearby hospital. The crash happened minutes after he had led the event for 15 laps and looked on course for a podium.

Hours after the crash, he said: "I'm feeling fine all things considered. I'm just thankful I came out of it alive. I'm hoping for a speedy recovery and I'm already looking forward to being back behind the wheel of a race car."

JUNE

THE LONDON Golf Club revealed audacious plans to submit a bid to host the 2015 Solheim Cup.

Women's golf's equivalent to the Ryder Cup, the event attracts crowds of 120,000 with a worldwide television audience of 400 million.

After hosting two events on the European Tour, Kate Brewer, marketing manager at the club near Ash, felt it was a competitive bid.

She said: "The Solheim Cup is part of our long-term plans and we feel we are perfectly

placed in terms of our location. We've hosted many tournaments in the past to show we're up there and the Solheim Cup would be another big achievement."

Ultimately the bid was unsuccessful, as Forest Pines in Lincolnshire was selected as Britain's entry in September.

THERE was an extraordinary exchange between Gillingham and Dover Athletic which saw relations sink so low their pre-season friendly was cancelled to avoid the possibility of crowd trouble.

Following Andy Hessenthaler's move from Crabble to Priestfield in May, his assistant Mark Robson left a fortnight after accepting the role. In his place Hessenthaler appointed Ian Hendon, who had been named as Dover manager but had not signed his contract with the Whites.

Dover fans' anger was further fuelled as head of youth Darren Hare and player/coach Nicky Southall also made the trip up the A2.

Jim Parmenter, Dover chairman, was worried of a "backlash" from supporters and opted to scrap the fixture.

Hessenthaler was unapologetic about the events: "I don't feel too bad about it because I have only got to go through the fantastic set of players who I brought to the club. I can understand their frustration, but life goes on."

JULY



DRAUGHT PICK: Ryan Richards is in the NBA

RYAN Richards became the first Briton to be drafted into the NBA for four years after he was selected by the San Antonio Spurs.

The 6ft 11ins forward came from nowhere to become a hot prospect after an impressive performance at the pre-draft trial in Chicago.

Richards, 19, played junior basketball for Kent Crusaders before moving on to play professionally in Spain.

Jesse Sazant, Crusaders' chairman, was delighted one of his former charges had earned a dream move to the world's best basketball league.

He said: "San Antonio have a proven track record of spotting talent in Europe, developing players and providing quality coaching, so it's a good place for him to be if he wants to keep developing."

Richards' mother Debbie, who still lives in Sittingbourne, said: "It's unbelievable, because this sort of thing doesn't really happen to everyone."

KENT'S controversial plans to stage a 'home' game at the Oval came to fruition as they hosted Essex in a Friends Provident t20 clash.

The move, which was aimed at enticing a bumper crowd to ease the club's financial concerns, was met with criticism from some quarters of the Spitfires' support, uncomfortable with playing outside the county.

Although the gate of 7,620 was only just over half the 14,000 Kent were hoping for, new chief executive Jamie Clifford was satisfied with the turnout.

"We're not punching the air and saying this has changed our fortunes and we've had a big pay day," he said. "But similarly, it's good, it's our biggest crowd of the season and we've taken a bold step that has lots of intangible benefits, shifting the perception of what Kent cricket is."

On the pitch, the Spitfires lost by four wickets.

AUGUST



Picture: ADY KERRY

WRONG TACTICS: Lisa Dobriskey

A TACTICAL error cost Lisa Dobriskey the chance of winning a medal at the European Athletics Championships in Barcelona.

The Ashford runner went into the event as one of the favourites for the 1500-metre title, a year after winning silver at the World Athletics Championships.

Dobriskey was well-placed on the final lap, but was muscled out in the closing stages to finish fourth.

She said: "My biggest weakness is defending my position. Sometimes I work so hard to get into a good position, then a couple of strides later I let people push me out. I do need to definitely be a lot more aggressive and assertive."

The disappointment prompted the 26-year-old to go back on plans to skip the Commonwealth Games. But the frustrating year did not have a happy ending, with a thigh injury preventing Dobriskey from defending her 1500m title.



Picture: ADY KERRY

KENT EXIT: Amjad Khan

PACEMAN Amjad Khan played his final game for Kent after the club were unable to make a "meaningful offer" for a new contract.

The bowler, who has one Test cap for England, was waiting for the club to open negotiations, but their financial problems meant there was no scope to table a deal.

Khan said: "Ideally I would have liked to have continued my career at Kent, but it is not to be. I sympathise with Kent's off-field financial pressures and know the key people wanted me to stay."

Although the 29-year-old's contract ran until the end of the season, he did not play again. His departure sparked turmoil in the St Lawrence dressing room, with Martin van Jaarsveld, James Tredwell and Darren Stevens among the senior players considering leaving. Khan eventually completed a move to Sussex.

SEPTEMBER

THE PLUSH surroundings of Tonbridge School provided the backdrop to Australia's announcement their athletes would use the facilities in the build-up to the London Olympics.

The memorandum of understanding commits the squad to training at the school for a fortnight before the Games begin in 2012.

Dame Kelly Holmes, double Olympic champion in 2004, was at the launch and felt the school provided the perfect venue for a training camp.

She said: "From an athlete's perspective you want to go somewhere that's relaxed. That means the professionalism of your environment and the training venues need to be up to scratch and work like clockwork. For athletics, they've got it all here."

Australia plan to relay sections of the school's running track to replicate the surface used in the Olympic stadium in Stratford.



Picture: ADY KERRY

SPIN WIZARD: James Tredwell

A FANTASTIC spell from James Tredwell helped Kent finish the LV= County Championship season with a victory, but it could not prevent their relegation from the top flight.

The spinner returned career best figures of 7 for 22, including a hat-trick, as Rob Key's men beat Yorkshire by four wickets at Headingley.

It was ultimately fruitless, as Warwickshire's emphatic win at Hampshire condemned Kent to Division Two.

A dejected head coach, Paul Farbrace, said: "It may turn out to be beneficial to some of our young players, but the sooner we are back in Division One and competing with the best teams the better. If that takes a while to turn around, then we will all have to be patient."

The disappointment was tempered by the long-awaited start of the St Lawrence Ground redevelopment at the end of the month.

OCTOBER

GOLFER Benn Barham went under the knife to remove one of his kidneys after a scan revealed a tumour.

The problem was only caught early because the 34-year-old, who lives in Tenterden, had an ultrasound after complaining of stomach pain. There were no abnormalities in his stomach, but doctors noticed the tumour and decided to operate.

Speaking from his hospital bed, Barham said: "I feel pretty groogy but that's expected after a major operation, and now I have just got to wait for the results.

"It's a weight off my mind knowing I've had the operation, but now I've just got to wait and see what plan of action I will have to take next."

The tumour did prove to be cancerous but the results showed it had not spread, allowing Barham to contemplate a return to professional golf.



Picture: GETTY IMAGES

GOLDEN GIRL: Montell Douglas (second from left) won 100m relay medal in Delhi

A GOLD medal for Montell Douglas headed the list of achievements by the county's athletes at the Commonwealth Games in Delhi.

Although the build-up was dominated by fears over security and unfinished venues, the Games went off largely without a hitch.

Douglas, from Chatham, was part of the 4x100-metre team which triumphed in the final, edging out Ghana.

She said: "Christine Bowmaker, our coach, has been fantastic and gave us the biggest speech before we came here. She told us to run our skins off and we did. I'm so happy, it's the best feeling in the world and it makes my 2010."

Bromley-born swimmer Ellen Gandy won two silvers and a bronze in the pool. A host of others won medals, while Canterbury ladies' Natalie Seymour picked up her third bronze of the year with England women's hockey side, following success in the Champions Trophy and World Cup.

NOVEMBER



Picture: ADY KERRY

SHOCK: Dover celebrate knocking rivals Gilllingham out of the FA Cup

THE FIRST-round proper of the FA Cup provided a mixture of drama, heartache and pride in a memorable series of games.

With four non-league sides negotiating the qualifying rounds, it was Kent's best showing for 46 years and the ties did not disappoint.

Dover Athletic returned to haunt former manager Andy Hessenthaler as they deservedly beat a feeble Gillingham 2-0 at Priestfield. The run continued for the Whites, who beat Aldershot Town 2-0 in the next round to set up a tie with Huddersfield Town next month.

Hythe Town became the first Kent League side to reach the stage for more than 50 years after winning six qualifying ties. Their run came to an end at League Two Hereford United, losing 5-1.

Dartford were nine minutes away from knocking out Port Vale, who scored a late equaliser at Princes Park and went on to win the second game 4-0.

Ebbsfleet United's replay with AFC Wimbledon was far tighter. A thrilling game saw the Wombles score last gasp goals in normal time and extra-time to edge out Liam Daish's side 3-2.

LASHINGS found themselves involved in a worldwide media storm after offering refuge to exiled wicketkeeper Zulqarnain Haider.

The 24-year-old became a household name overnight when he deserted the Pakistan team and applied for asylum in the UK after claiming he had received death threats from a match-fixing ring.

Lashings, the world XI cricket team based in Maidstone, have a history of taking in players faced with similar situations and decided to act.

"We would welcome him with open arms," Lashings chairman David Folb said. "We'd be delighted to have him here and bring him into the Lashings fold, as we did when Henry Olonga was forced into exile seven years ago."

The two parties met for negotiations, but the talks stalled in December over bureaucratic problems with Zulqarnain's residential status.

DECEMBER

STAR batsman Martin van Jaarsveld revealed he had considered leaving Kent in the summer due to the club's financial problems.

The South African was alarmed at rumours the county were cutting their playing budget sharply, a move which had already seen Amjad Khan leave in August.

Van Jaarsveld was candid about the situation, but has now reiterated his commitment to Kent for next season.

He said: "At one stage in the summer I was slightly concerned with the financial issues at the club; whether there would be any backing to bring in new blood or sign a few new bowlers.

"It was more of a career point of view and a family point of view that maybe I looked elsewhere. But at the moment I am pretty happy at Kent and I'm looking forward to helping the boys back into the first division."



SEVENS WIN: Dan Caprice

AN EXCELLENT year for Dan Caprice was rounded off by helping England's rugby sevens side to the top of the world rankings.

The 21-year-old, born in Chatham, was a regular fixture in last season's World Series, but really cemented his place in the national side with a string of impressive displays at the Commonwealth Games.

England eventually finished fourth in Delhi and Caprice went on to enhance his status by scoring a host of tries as the team won the World Series event in Dubai.

He said: "It hasn't really sunk in yet, it's the first time I've been in a number one team and even in sevens it's a big achievement to be knocking over the big nations."

The World Series continues in New Zealand in February.

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Picture: IGOR KUPCO



THREAT: Race organisers are hoping to avoid delays this year Picture: IGOR KUPCO

Weather threat to cross-country championships

ORGANISERS of the Kent Cross Country Championships are keeping a close eye on the weather forecast in the hope of avoiding a second postponement in as many years.

Ice and heavy snow forced the event at Detling Hill, near Maidstone, to be pushed back by five weeks in January last year.

Severe wintry conditions have returned in the build-up to the championships, which takes place next Saturday, raising the possibility of another postponement.

With Dartford Harriers taking over from Medway & Maidstone as the host club, the venue has switched to Wilmington Grammar School.

Frank Sando, head of cross-country at the Kent County Athletic Association, believes the switch could improve the chances of it going ahead.

He said: "I don't think we'll have quite the same worry in getting there as last time, when the problem was we were at the top of Detling Hill. We have to bear in mind health and safety and we'll check the course nearer the time."

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BEN WANTS TO STIG AROUND

EXCLUSIVE

By **TOM HOWARD**

Former Top Gear driver aiming to spur Motorbase on to title success

THE MAN formerly known as 'The Stig' from BBC's Top Gear has revealed his desire to secure a drive with a Kent motor racing team in 2011.

Ben Collins, who was sensationally unveiled as the man behind the famous white crash helmet from the hit television show in August, has admitted he hopes to join Wrotham-based Motorbase Performance for the new season.

The 35-year-old, who now works for Five's Fifth Gear, has been associated with the British Touring Car Championship (BTCC) squad since last winter, when the team offered him a test drive at Brands Hatch.

A deal to race for the entire campaign this year was not forthcoming, but he was drafted in to fill Motorbase's third car for the final round at Brands in October, a seat he hopes to secure for next year's championship.

He said: "Absolutely, I want to be part of the team and driving for them next season, but it will all come down to sponsorship. Addison Lee and Airwaves sponsored me for the drive at Brands Hatch and I am putting together proposals to be in the third car. We have been talking to [team owner] David Bartrum and hopefully the proposals will go well and we will be able to sort something to be on the grid for the new season.

"The motorsport industry has shut down for Christmas now, but I hope to have some news in the New Year. The team are not due to start testing until February anyway."

Motorbase, who enjoyed their best season to date by finishing runner-up in this year's Independent Teams' title race, will be considered as genuine championship contenders next season. The squad announced earlier this month they have purchased three title-winning Ford Focus cars and have signed a new lucrative sponsorship deal with chewing gum brand Airwaves. The team are yet to disclose their driver line-up, but Bartrum has revealed Collins is a potential option.

Although Collins' BTCC debut in October didn't go quite to plan after finishing the meeting with just two points, the former Le Mans 24 Hours racer says the experience has fuelled a desire to become a permanent fixture in the championship.

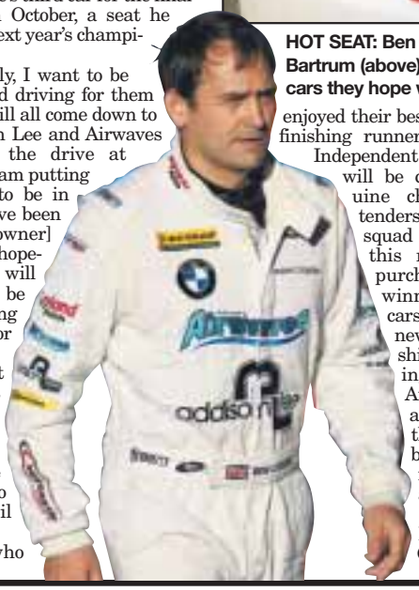
He said: "The team [Motorbase] were fantastic and the racing is basically legalised road rage. At Le Mans it is an endurance race, whereas the BTCC is a short sprint and it's frenetic. The Brands meeting was good and despite the problems I was able to put in times relative to my team-mates."

Whether he secures a race seat or not, he believes Motorbase could be involved in one of the most intriguing BTCC seasons for years.

He said: "I think it's going to be an interesting year next season with the new rules. The cars will have the new turbo engines and Motorbase have last year's Ford Focus, which was run by Arena Motorsport. Arena will have the new Focus, but who is to say that the old one won't be quicker."



Collins picture: NICK DUNGAN Bartram picture: PETER STILL



HOT SEAT: Ben Collins (left) is hoping Motorbase Performance supremo David Bartrum (above) will select him to drive one of the team's three new Ford Focus cars they hope will challenge for the British Touring Car Championship

New Year fixtures set to challenge our clubs

THE NEW Year starts with a bang for football fans as all the county's top sides finish a hectic festive period by playing twice in the space of three days.

At Priestfield there is a first-ever competitive meeting between Gillingham and Stevenage on Saturday as both sides look to begin 2011 by edging nearer the League Two play-offs.

Andy Hessenthaler's side then make the trip to Wycombe Wanderers on Monday, hoping to avenge a 3-0 defeat on the final day of last season which saw them relegated.

The Conference South contains a host of intriguing encounters to kick-off the year. Dover Athletic, who next week face Huddersfield Town in the FA Cup, host fellow pace setters Bromley.

Elsewhere the other Kent derby sees Dartford make the short trip to Welling United.

Ebbsfleet United will be expecting all three points at home to struggling Lewes as they warm up for the trip to title hopefuls Braintree Town 48 hours later.

There are derbies galore in the Ryman Leagues on Monday.

Margate are at Maidstone United and Tonbridge Angels welcome Folkestone Invicta in the Ryman Premier, while Whitstable Town and Chatham Town visit Faversham Town and Ramsgate respectively.

The Kent League resumes on Monday, with the pick of the games seeing leaders Herne Bay host Lordswood.



AWAY DAY: Cody McDonald and Gillingham make the trip to Wycombe on Monday

Picture: ADY KERRY

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